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## Senate

The Senate met at 10:01 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, who has guided our lives and is the author and finisher of our faith, teach us to live for Your glory. Keep us from becoming intoxicated by the desire for success and protect us from the fear of failure that paralyzes noble striving. Lord, lead us through the valley of pride and across the gorges of pretension to the richness of Your transforming spirit of love. Today, guide the Members of our Nation's legislative branch with Your wisdom. Show them solutions to the problems that beset our land and empower them with the compassion that seeks first to honor You. We pray in Your righteous Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, February 1, 2023.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNOCK thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, there is a little housekeeping, and then I will give my remarks.

### MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 184

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for a second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 184) to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that major rules of the executive branch shall have no force or effect unless a joint resolution of approval is enacted into law.

Mr. SCHUMER. In order to place the bill on the calendar, under the provi-

sions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

### DEBT CEILING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, House Republicans are struggling—struggling—to grasp a harsh reality about being in the majority. There is no good substitute for having a plan. You can't solve the Nation's biggest problems without a plan—a plan we can debate in Congress and which the American people can judge for themselves. This is especially true—especially true—when it comes to the debt ceiling.

Later this afternoon, President Biden will meet with Speaker MCCARTHY for their first one-on-one meeting of the year, and everyone is asking the same question of Speaker MCCARTHY: What is your plan? Where is your plan, Republicans? Where is your plan, Speaker MCCARTHY?

For days, Speaker MCCARTHY has heralded this sit-down as some kind of major win in his debt ceiling talks, but Speaker MCCARTHY is forgetting something obvious to everyone else: If you don't have a plan, you can't seriously pretend you are having any real negotiation.

Let me say that again because it is so crystal clear.

Speaker MCCARTHY, if you don't have a plan, you can't seriously pretend you are having any real negotiation.

Speaker MCCARTHY showing up at the White House without a plan is like sitting down at the table without cards in your hand.

And look, we know why the Speaker has struggled and is unable to produce a plan or why he is delaying it or avoiding it. He doesn't have the votes for one, in all likelihood. Some Senate Republicans want Social Security and Medicare cuts. Others want to cut the healthcare that Americans depend on

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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through Medicaid. And at least one Republican said on raising the debt ceiling: I am a “no” no matter what.

Speaker MCCARTHY knows that it is next to impossible to pass a plan through his own House—that he can’t do that. So Speaker MCCARTHY may claim he wants to negotiate, but that is, ultimately, empty talk if the hard right has the power to reject whatever the Speaker proposes. It is a toxic dynamic that, sadly, isn’t going away any time soon.

When President Trump was in office, I sat down with him to talk about the importance of raising the debt ceiling, and we didn’t engage in threats or brinksmanship or hostage-taking. Instead, we Democrats presented a plan and moved forward from there. It was not easy. It took a lot of preparation and tough decision making, but, each time, we got the job done.

So one more time, House Republicans, show us your plan. You have an obligation to be transparent with the American people. If you don’t have the votes to pass a plan, let’s just get the debt ceiling done. If the plan involves drastic cuts to millions of Americans, then Republicans have an obligation to show the American people what those cuts are because Americans could be faced with the very painful, painful results of those proposed cuts.

Republicans owe it—owe it—to the American people. Speaker MCCARTHY owes it to the American people to stop dodging, to put pen to paper, and to explain clearly how Congress is going to ensure the United States does not default for the first time in history. We Democrats have a plan: Raise the debt ceiling without brinksmanship or hostage-taking, as it has been done before. Speaker MCCARTHY doesn’t have a plan, so he is not really negotiating, and the clock is ticking.

#### EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on the ERA, which is a different and extremely important matter, I want to praise and echo the words of my colleagues yesterday who reintroduced a resolution to affirm the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

The resolution is simple. It removes the arbitrary deadline for ERA ratification that was placed by Congress in the 1970s and recognizes the amendment as a valid part of the Constitution. There is no good reason why a constitutional amendment needs a deadline, especially not an amendment that affirms gender equality.

The Equal Rights Amendment has never been as necessary and urgent as it is today. The Supreme Court’s repeal of *Roe v. Wade* reminded all of us that, even today—in 2023, the 21st century—women don’t have the same fundamental rights as men. So this resolution is a terrific and necessary idea.

The ERA has been ratified by three-quarters of the States but not in the requisite time, and that is what this

proposal would fix. It is very popular in the minds of the American people, and I strongly support the resolution. I want my daughters and granddaughter to live in a country where they never have to worry about being discriminated against simply because of their gender. Sadly, today, that is not the case. The ERA would fix that.

So I want to thank Senators CARDIN and DURBIN, Representatives PRESSLEY, DEAN, and BUSH, and everyone who is championing this important resolution.

#### ELECTIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, finally, on election undermining by the Republican National Committee, one of the biggest lessons of last November was that, for all of the attempts by MAGA Republicans to undermine our elections, the roots of our democracy remain strong and run deep.

For 2 years, we heard the same thing over and over again from the MAGA brigade: that the 2020 elections were stolen, that President Biden was illegitimate, and that we couldn’t trust that our votes were properly counted.

Well, Americans simply didn’t buy it. They saw that the elections were fair. Some have said these were the fairest elections we have ever had. Yet, in every virtual race last fall, MAGA candidates who campaigned explicitly on denying the results of the 2020 election and overturning it were rejected by the voters. It was a good result for the country, for our democracy. Frankly, it was a necessary wake-up call for the GOP, telling them: Get rid of the Big Lie once and for all. The American people aren’t buying it. Maybe a small band of extreme rightwingers is—MAGA people—but not everybody else.

It was so disturbing to read in the *Washington Post* that the RNC is not abandoning the conspiracy of the Big Lie so much as it is doubling down. According to reports, they are working on creating a “permanent infrastructure in every state to ramp up ‘election integrity’ activities” as a way to cater to that portion of their base that still believes in wacky election fraud conspiracies.

As a sign of how unserious this report is, the RNC also makes unfounded claims of a “continuing onslaught of Democrat election manipulation.” I would call it ridiculous—it is ridiculous—but it is a troubling attempt to undermine our democracy. When people don’t believe the elections are on the level, that is the beginning of the end of this grand experiment in democracy that has lasted for centuries. Fortunately, the American people are rejecting it, but the Republicans that lead the MAGA wing are keeping at it.

I will make this easy for the folks over at the RNC: Undermining our elections is a losing strategy. It is a loser politically. It didn’t work last year, and it is not going to work next year. For the sake of our country and

the sake of the GOP, the RNC and the MAGA wing of the Republican Party need to break the election fraud echo chamber that has paralyzed their party and has, frankly, caused them to lose election after election.

#### GATEWAY PROJECT

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, yesterday, Mr. President, was a very special day for the people of New York. After a lot of hard work, we finally welcomed President Biden to celebrate progress on Gateway, the most important infrastructure project in America.

Anyone who knows me knows Gateway has been one of my greatest passions for more than a decade. Call it a labor of love—and it is—because I love New York. Without our tunnels, the region’s economy would come to a screeching halt, and not just New York’s, not just New Jersey’s but the whole Northeast and eventually the whole country’s.

So after many false starts and a lot of opposition, Gateway is finally full speed ahead, thanks to both the bipartisan infrastructure law and the great help and enthusiasm from President Biden.

We had a good time yesterday—the President, I, and the other Senators—because we knew we were getting something so important done. And that is why we are here. The implementation of the bills we passed last year is really vital to this country and to keeping our prosperity going and increasing.

There were a lot of smiles at yesterday’s celebration. Many of us waited for years for this moment, and after a lot of persistence, we can finally say Gateway is going to be built.

Gateway is just one of the major infrastructure initiatives supported by the bipartisan infrastructure law. Just like the CHIPS and Science Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, it is beginning to pay real dividends in the form of new jobs, new investments, and prosperity. We are going to see much more of it this year and the years to come.

That is precisely what Democrats promised to do, and that is what we are delivering on.

I thank the President for helping us and celebrating with us yesterday in New York.

I yield the floor.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### DEBT LIMIT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, later today, the Speaker of the House and the President will begin bipartisan discussions about the future and trajectory of our government’s borrowing and spending.

It is right, appropriate, and entirely normal that our need to raise the debt limit would be paired with negotiations regarding Democrats' runaway printing and spending.

The American people changed control of the House because the voters wanted to constrain Democrats' runaway, reckless, party-line spending. The voters of this country looked at the trillions of dollars of party-line spending, the runaway inflation, and the mountain of debt, and last November they hit the brakes.

We just experienced 2 years when Washington Democrats got to set policy without negotiating, and the American people put an end to it.

Some Democrats are trying to rewrite history and pretend that Republican demands for negotiations are unusual, but that, of course, is just false.

Back in 2017, the Senate Democratic leader said the debt ceiling gave Democrats "leverage" in broader talks. As the New York Times explained back in 2017, then-Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic leader "began formulating a plan to apply pressure, jettisoning the idea of backing a straightforward or 'clean' debt limit measure . . . as a way to gain muscle in coming negotiations." That was the Pelosi-Schumer playbook for the debt limit: Demand negotiations.

Here is how the Democratic leader put it himself at the time. He said the debt ceiling "gives another ample opportunity for bipartisanship, not for one party jamming its choices down the throats of the other."

So I trust Democrats will be consistent with their past positions and the White House will waste no time beginning the customary bipartisan negotiations with the new Republican majority over in the House. The President of the United States does not get to walk away from the table.

The same President who happily signed off on trillions of dollars of needless party-line spending needs to begin good-faith negotiations on spending reform with Speaker MCCARTHY and do it today.

#### STUDENT LOANS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on a related matter, there are lots of egregious ways that President Biden has wasted taxpayer money trying to buy up his low approval ratings, but the Democrats' proposal for student loan socialism is really one of the worst.

It is like the Democrats paid scientists in a lab to invent the most unfair government handout that could possibly, possibly exist. Democrats want to take the graduate school loans of doctors and lawyers and white-collar professionals making six figures and put their debt on the shoulders of Americans who didn't take out loans at all.

To the middle-class families who saved, sacrificed, and skipped vaca-

tions to pay for more of their kids' college, the Democrats want to turn you into suckers.

To the plumbers, firefighters, check-out clerks, and auto mechanics who made career choices to avoid taking on debt, the Democrats think dentists and the lawyers deserve extra handouts at your expense.

To the patriots who volunteered to serve our Nation in uniform as part of a plan to attend college debt-free, the Democrats want to change the rules behind your back.

President Biden and his party wake up every day looking for ways to transfer money and power away from the working class toward elites. But even for today's Democratic Party, this one is especially galling.

This is "reverse Robin Hood" policy: Democrats stealing from the working class to reward people who are comparatively better off. It just isn't fair on a personal level. It is also staggeringly reckless fiscal policy.

Remember, this whole undertaking was first set up as a short-term emergency measure at the very start of COVID—those earliest weeks when the entire economy seemed to be in a free fall. That was almost 3 years ago.

Shortly afterward, thanks to the bipartisan CARES Act that came out of the Republican-led Senate, the economy rebounded. Household savings actually went up. Many white-collar professionals spent months, if not years, working remotely from the comfort of their living rooms. Any legitimate reason for pausing loan payments evaporated just a few months after it began, but the Democrats have kept it going, year after year. Now they want to magically wave away people's debts altogether. Needless to say, this would be enormously expensive for the country.

If you add up the cost of three things: the nearly 3-year-long "pause" thus far, the mass jubilee the Biden administration is trying to defend in court, and the Democrats' proposal to turn the income-driven payment program into permanent socialism, the total cost of these three measures is projected to hit \$1 trillion—\$1 trillion.

This estimate is from our colleague Senator CASSIDY, who is shining a bright spotlight on these terrible policies as the incoming ranking member of the HELP Committee.

On top of all the reckless inflationary spending the Democrats have pushed through, they want to redistribute up to another trillion dollars away from working-class Americans toward college-educated people who already earn higher salaries on average.

The Democrats want to squeeze even more money out of cashiers, welders, first responders, janitors, and cosmetologists and send it to a group of people who already outearn those people on an average basis—more reckless spending, more debt inflation, and no fairness for American families.

#### BURMA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, finally, today marks a solemn anniversary for the people of Burma and for all of us around the world who spent years—literally years—rooting for them to make progress toward greater freedom and democracy. Two years ago, their hopes of a stable democracy were wrenched away by a brutal military coup.

To date, this takeover by the Tatmadaw, which is their army, has displaced 1.2 million people, including many thousands who have been forced to flee the country altogether.

Inside Burma, more than 16,000 people have been taken as political prisoners. At one point, the military was detaining American journalist Danny Fenster and Nathan Maung; the Australian economist, Sean Turnell; dozens of innocent children; and, of course, my friend Aung San Suu Kyi, whose latest conviction and a sham trial leaves her facing the possibility of life in prison.

Expert observers count the coup's death toll at 19,000. That includes people this illegitimate government simply executed outright, like the activists Ko Jimmy and Phyo Zeya Thaw.

Now the leaders of the Tatmadaw coup are laying out plans in broad daylight to stamp out Burma's pro-democracy movement once and for all. The military is shedding any last ounce of legitimacy it pretended to have and is now conducting airstrikes against innocent civilians.

The junta's new regulations for this year's election are designed to make viable opposition virtually impossible. No wonder the illegitimate Tatmadaw rulers rolled out the red carpet for Putin's Foreign Minister to visit Burma. Thugs recognize other thugs.

On the second anniversary of the coup, with a potentially devastating sham election on the horizon, it is absolutely vital that the United States continue our assistance to the National Unity Government and other key groups working inside Burma to protect the innocent and advance the cause of democracy and increase cross-border humanitarian aid. By our example, America should rally our partners to raise the international stakes for the Tatmadaw's continued brutality.

In December, the National Defense Authorization Act instructed the Biden administration to take several more concrete steps to bulk up American support for the people of Burma. It made sanctions on senior junta officials mandatory. It required more targeted and precisely timed sanctions against state-owned enterprises like MOGE, M-O-G-E. Finally, the NDAA also notably authorized funding for programs to strengthen federalism in and among ethnic states in Burma and for technical support and nonlethal assistance to Burma's ethnic armed organizations and People's Defence Forces to strengthen communication, command and control, and coordination of

international relief and other operations between and among those entities.

So, Mr. President, the people of Burma are fighting for the sort of future that citizens of democracies like ours enjoy: the right to self-determination. I am proud to stand behind them in this effort.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. THUNE pertaining to the introduction of S. 204 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. THUNE. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Louisiana.

### EDUCATION

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, Louisiana, like all of our States, is working as hard as we can to improve K-12, elementary and secondary education. We used to have the best system of elementary and secondary education in the world. We still have the best system of higher education in the world, bar none. Kids from all over our planet want to come to America to go to college.

I know our universities have problems. We have to do a better job, in my judgment, with encouraging our universities to allow the free exchange of ideas, the dialectic through which we get the truth. I will save that topic for another day.

Our problem in America is elementary and secondary education. It is frustrating. We made some improvements, but not nearly enough. It is frustrating. Americans can do extraordinary things. Americans can unravel the human genome. Americans can take a diseased human heart and replace it with a new one and make the thing beat. Americans can send a person to the Moon and bring that person back safely. But we can't seem to teach all of our kids how to read and write and do basic math when we have 18 years to do it. I know the Presiding Officer knows what I am talking about because you, in a prior lifetime, have been in the trenches. Yes, we made progress, but it is so, so frustrating sometimes.

We have made progress. I know in Colorado, in part under your leadership—in large part under your leadership—Colorado has made strides. We made strides in Louisiana. We started—we have made efforts to improve for many, many years, but we started in earnest under a Governor in Lou-

isiana called Governor Buddy Roemer, back in the late eighties, early nineties. I am not saying other Governors before and after Buddy didn't contribute mightily, but Buddy made education a major goal of his administration. And we have made progress, but it is fits and it is starts.

Here is our problem today. Some years ago, we started grading our schools. We graded our schools in Louisiana, our elementary and secondary school for two reasons. First, because we want education quality and, No. 2, transparency. We want parents to know where their child is going to school. We grade our schools A, B, C, D, E, F, and it is tough because everybody wants to be the best, but that which is measured gets done.

Today, we still grade our schools and we should continue to grade our schools. But here is the problem: Forty-one percent of our elementary and middle schools get As and Bs. I think that is probably pretty accurate. We are going to get that number up, those letter grades up, but about 41 percent of our elementary and middle schools grade "A" or "B." Seventy percent of our high schools grade "A" or "B." Something is not mentioned here. I wish I could say that 70 percent of our high schools were "A" or "B" schools, but we all know in Louisiana that they are not. If you look at our college entry scores, if you look at our ACT scores, if you look at other objective assessments, they are not in line with 70 percent of our high schools being "A" schools or "B" schools, while only 40 percent of our elementary and middle schools are. And that is just a fact. I hope there will come a time in my lifetime when I come here and say we have 90 percent or all of our schools are "A" or "B" schools, but I can't do that today. I wish I could, but I can't.

We need to look reality in the eye and accept it—not like we do in Washington, look reality in the eye and deny it. In Louisiana, we believe in looking reality in the eye and accept it. I know it is hard.

Right now, our teachers and our principals and our superintendents and our legislatures and people of Louisiana who care about education are trying to reform the system and come up with a new methodology, an objective methodology that properly grades our high schools; and it is hard. I know. I get it.

Here is the undercurrent. A lot of our teachers and our principals and our school board members are concerned that if the grades go down to reflect reality, they are going to get blamed. They are going to get blamed, and I get it. And it is wrong to blame them.

I will just mention our teachers. You know, for a kid to learn, somebody has to make him do his homework. Teachers can't do that. For a kid to learn, someone has to make that child go to bed at night and get a full night's sleep. For a kid to learn, someone has to feed that kid breakfast in the morning. For a kid to learn, someone at

home has to enforce and reinforce to that child that he or she has to mind his teachers. It is called "parents."

In Louisiana, as in other States and as throughout the world, unfortunately, we have some parents who don't seem to care. I don't know what to do about that. I don't know why it is, but we do. And we can't expect teachers and superintendents and school board members to take the place of parents, but too often, they are blamed for all of the problems when, really, it starts with the parents. And the fact of the matter is, if a parent—if a parent doesn't love his kid—I can't imagine that, but it happens—if a parent doesn't love his kid, the kid is not going to stop loving his parent; the kid is going to stop loving himself. So I get it. We can't hold our teachers and our superintendents and our school board members responsible for fixing the impossible. We just have to figure out a way to work around it.

It is not just money. The Federal Government, State government, local government last year spent somewhere in the range of \$760 billion—three-quarters of a trillion dollars—on elementary and secondary education. In Louisiana, we spent about \$12,000 per year, per child. That is a lot of money in my State, given the standard in cost of living. By way of comparison, Florida spends about \$10,000. It is not just money. I read a statistic one time—it is several years old. I don't know if it is accurate today or not. But I read several years ago that we spend twice as much—we, in America—spend about twice as much on elementary and secondary education as Slovakia does, yet we rank about the same. I don't know if it is still accurate, but it was then. It is not just money. It is also will. It is commitment.

I want to emphasize one more time that we need to come up with a new system that doesn't just blame the teachers and the superintendents and the school board members. I don't blame them for not wanting to be the scapegoats. About—I don't know—it was 2002, 2003, I was State treasurer. One day, I was listening in on a legislative hearing, listening to all these experts testify about how we fix these schools. There was not a teacher among them. I remember thinking, you know, I wonder how many of these folks really know what public schools are like today. So I went back to my office, and I made a phone call to these Baton Rouge Parish School systems where our State capital is located, and I said: What does it take to be a substitute teacher? They said, man, we need substitutes. All you have to do is have a college degree and go to a short orientation. We need substitutes so bad, we will take politicians. I said: Sign me up.

Every year since then, I try to do it three times a year. Sometimes I try to do it more. I have done it less this year. I will make it up this spring. I have been a volunteer substitute teacher. Every time, I insisted I really want

to be the substitute. I don't want somebody there with me. I don't want to just go and talk about how a bill becomes law. I want to be a substitute. If you do it—I encourage everybody to do it—you start about, I don't know, depending on the school, quarter to 7 and go to 2:45, maybe 3, 3:30. You have lunchroom duty or bus duty.

Let me tell you something. You are worn out. The first time I did it—I will never do this again. They gave me 11th grade chemistry. After about 2 hours—nobody told me this, I realized, man, you have got to go to the bathroom before you start class.

The next time I taught, I remember I brought a thermos of coffee because you get so tired. But my point is, after starting—I think then, we started at 8 and I went to 2:45. My plan was to go home after substitute teaching this chemistry class—my plan was to go to my office at the State Capitol there and work. I went home. I was dead-dog, down-to-the-marrow tired. It is hard being a teacher. It is hard. We have done a better job in Louisiana, with our teachers' cooperation, finding out which of our teachers can teach and paying them. And we also worked hard to find out which of our teachers can't teach and either teach them how or find a new line of work. I am not going to stand here and blame the teachers.

But I return to where I began. Seventy percent of our schools are not "A" and "B" schools. I wish they were. Some day they will be, but they are not. All I am asking today to my people back home who are listening, to the people in Louisiana who care about education—and most of them do—to our teachers, to our principals, to our superintendents, to our school board members, to our board of elementary and secondary members, to our legislators: Let's work together. Let's look reality in the eye and accept it. Let's understand that we need a new methodology to try to grade our schools. Let's look reality in the eye and accept the fact that our parents deserve to know the quality of school that their kids are attending, and let's come up with a new system that is accurate but that is fair to everybody. Let's stop blaming people and regretting yesterday and start creating tomorrow.

Because in my State—and I bet it is true in the Presiding Officer's State—the future of my State is education. It is not the price of oil, it is not the unemployment rate, it is not who the Senators are. It is education.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

#### CRYPTOCURRENCY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, before he leaves, let me commend my colleague from Louisiana. His role as a substitute teacher is one I greatly admire.

I thank you for sharing that with us today. I am sure it gives you great in-

sight into education—greater than some—and I am going to accept your challenge and try to find a way to be a substitute teacher myself along the way, if they will have me. But thank you for that statement.

It has been almost 100 years since the Great Depression. It was a terrible time in American history. Businesses failed right and left. Families lost all of their savings. There were runs on banks, businesses failing. It was a horrible moment.

Luckily for us, the leadership of Franklin Roosevelt appeared in 1933, when he was sworn in as President of the United States, and we made some significant basic changes. One of them we still benefit from today: Federal deposit insurance.

If you go to a recognized legal bank in America, a regulated bank, under our Federal guidelines, there is an insurance policy that says that even if this bank goes bust, we are going to be there to protect much of your savings, maybe all of them, depending on how much you have invested in that bank.

We were tested during the savings and loan crisis a few decades ago, and we kept our promise. We paid people back when the savings institutions they were invested in failed.

But there are areas where you can invest your own personal savings where there is no insurance policy. You are on your own. The stock market is one of them.

By and large, when you buy stock, if you don't make money on it, that is your personal loss. But even when it comes to the stock market, the companies that are in that stock market doing business in America are largely subject to regulation. So we know, at least, that the books they are presenting have to be legal and be accurate in their disclosures. It is just the basics of government regulation.

However, there are some areas where you can bet your money or invest your money where there is no protection and no regulation. I want to speak to one of those areas at this moment. This area has been called the "new money," "digital cash," and some have called it "the way of the future." I have another name for it: reckless, predatory, foolish, and dangerous. I am referring, of course, to cryptocurrency, the latest scam to rip off millions of hard-working Americans to the tune of billions of dollars.

In under a decade, this industry has skyrocketed in popularity, raked in big bucks for its leading speculators, before exploding into dust for all the world to see.

Let me tell you about crypto's terrible, horrible, no-good, very bad year—2022. Let's start with the most popular cryptocurrency, Bitcoin. In 2022, the currency cratered, losing more than 60 percent of its value in 1 year.

To put it in perspective, if you bought one Bitcoin at the start of 2022 and held on to it today, you would be

down \$25,000. Think of all the Americans who could have held on to that cash for family needs or to cover a downpayment on their first home. Their money is gone. There is no insurance. It is just an investment that disappeared.

They are not alone. The disaster began last May with a financial meltdown known as "crypto winter." If you are one of the millions of consumers—millions—who were convinced by those well-respected financial advisers—Matt Damon, Larry David, and LeBron James—to buy into crypto, you don't need me to tell you what happened next.

In a matter of months, more than \$2 trillion vanished from this industry. One crypto firm after another folded. Even a so-called "stablecoin," which claims to offer great stability, went bust.

Then, in the fall, came the mighty collapse of the exchange FTX. Its founder, Sam Bankman-Fried, spent years cultivating the reputation of a selfless wunderkind and entrepreneur. He claimed crypto and the FTX platform would democratize finance, that he was giving a leg up to the little guy, finally, and sticking it to the barons of traditional finance.

It was all a lie. While Sam Bankman-Fried was burning millions of dollars branding himself as some noble disruptor, the reality is he was stealing his own users' money to fund his own risky bets.

Here is the worst part. For Americans who were scammed into investing in FTX, there is little hope of retrieving any of their money.

Earlier this week, Annie Lowrey wrote a piece in *The Atlantic*, sharing the story of one FTX user whose money was stolen. His name was Greg Sanders. Greg has actually been a crypto investor for quite a while, a pretty vigilant investor too. He even protected his assets with a technique he calls "cold storage."

So Greg knew about the risk with trading crypto. He knew those assets were loosely regulated, if regulated at all, and he knew about the volatility of the market. But Greg never expected that the company he trusted to safeguard his money would end up stealing it. He lost nearly \$10,000 when FTX collapsed, and, like millions of others, he hasn't gotten any money back.

Here is what he said about his experience: "FTX was legitimized in the public eye . . . I saw the Tom Brady commercials," Greg said. "I saw the Major League Baseball umpires" with FTX's name on their uniforms. "Its name was on the Miami Heat arena. There was so much legitimization from the public, and it lent credence to the idea that this was a safe place," to put your money.

Thankfully, Greg says he will be OK. He has a good-paying job and enough money saved to pay his bills.

But stop for a second and think about Americans who are not that lucky.

More than half of our Nation's families cannot afford a \$1,000 emergency, and those same families, who struggle to make ends meet, have been targeted by the crypto ad campaigns Greg mentioned.

In fact, leaders of the crypto industry have explicitly marketed their products to unbanked and underbanked Americans, those who do not have access to traditional financial services.

Now, this is a problem that disproportionately affects Black and Brown Americans, who have historically been outside the financial system. So along comes crypto and its leading fabulists, like Sam Bankman-Fried. These grifters cloak themselves in the language of inclusion and accessibility, promising that crypto is open to everybody and operates "without discrimination."

Well, in a way, they are right. When the crypto industry melted down, everybody got hurt, especially all of the Black and Brown Americans, who were more likely than White Americans to invest in crypto. It seems the cynical ad campaigns worked.

So as a new year begins, where do we stand with crypto? The industry is hoping the dust will settle, that things will quiet down. Maybe it will even blow over, and everybody will forget the damage of 2022.

Guess again. Our Federal regulators are coming to life, and they are bringing down the hammer on crypto.

I want to commend Securities and Exchange Commission Chair Gary Gensler. He is doing his part to protect the integrity of our capital markets and to hold bad actors accountable. In the past month alone, the SEC has filed charges against two major crypto companies for burning their investors.

And there are other cops on the beat too. On Friday, the Federal Reserve rejected an application from a crypto company called Custodia for a deposit account at the central bank and denied its request to become a member of the Federal Reserve System. In denying the application, the Federal Board wrote that Custodia "proposed to engage in novel and untested crypto activities . . . on open, public and/or decentralized networks."

As we have learned, that would be a recipe for disaster. So I am glad both the Fed and the SEC, among others, are working to insulate our broader financial system and protect investors from the instability of crypto.

But, now, it is time for wiser minds in finance to come to their senses, and it starts with Fidelity. To think the crypto industry has entranced one of the largest 401(k) providers in the world is shocking. Yet that is exactly what happened.

This past summer, Fidelity announced it would allow retirement plan sponsors to offer plan participants exposure to Bitcoin.

Remember, Bitcoin alone lost more than 60 percent of its value last year. Now imagine if your 401(k) lived or died

by the value of Bitcoin. That is unacceptable for 40 million Americans who invest with Fidelity, and I am one of them. Many of them are relying on those investments to retire in dignity.

So that is why last year I sent a letter, along with Senators WARREN and SMITH, to Fidelity CEO Abigail Johnson. We respectfully asked her to reconsider this ill-advised decision on crypto.

We received a response in which Fidelity said: "respectfully disagree[d] with the assertion that bitcoin cannot meet the higher standards applicable to retirement accounts."

So after the collapse of FTX, I thought: Let's send another letter to Fidelity and see if they have a change of heart.

We figured that at least diversifying from crypto would be a no-brainer at that point. Apparently not, because we still haven't received a response.

Hard-working Americans who entrust Fidelity with their retirement savings expect more. They deserve better than Ponzi schemes and endless volatility. The financial future and stability of millions of their customers—and many others—is on the line. It is time to do the right thing and be honest about cryptocurrency. There should be more transparency, accountability, and enough regulation so that we know they are telling the truth.

And let me close with one point. I was at a hearing with the Agriculture Committee where we were discussing the issue from a different perspective, whether Bitcoin and similar objects were commodities, subject to regulation by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, an Agency I know well from the financial industry in Chicago.

I left that hearing after some critical remarks about cryptocurrency, and a reporter stopped me in the hall, and she said to me: How much money have you received in political contributions from FTX?

I said: None.

She said: You are wrong. Look again.

I looked. It was over \$7,000—money that I did not solicit but banked not knowing what was behind that money. We have given that money to charity, as you might expect.

But they have more friends in high places than they have really good arguments for their product.

I think that we have got to be thoughtful and mindful as politicians that this industry has a lot of money riding on this bet, and we have got to be careful that we don't become so beholden to them that we lose our clear-eyed look at an entity that has hurt so many people already and is likely to do more in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### SUPPORTING THE OBSERVATION OF NATIONAL TRAFFICKING AND MODERN SLAVERY PREVENTION MONTH

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 21, submitted earlier today; that at 3:30 p.m., the Senate vote on adoption of the resolution; that if the resolution is agreed to, the preamble be considered and agreed to and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 21) supporting the observation of National Trafficking and Modern Slavery Prevention Month during the period beginning on January 1, 2023, and ending on February 1, 2023, to raise awareness of, and opposition to, human trafficking and modern slavery.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

(The remarks of Mr. MURPHY pertaining to the introduction of S. 220 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. MURPHY. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

### POLICE REFORM

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today, the family of Tyre Nichols will celebrate the life of a 29-year-old man who was brutally killed by police earlier this month. In the wake of this tragedy, we have heard the predictable renewed calls for police reform legislation here in Congress, something that we attempted not that long ago.

In the summer of 2020, Senators from both parties introduced police reform bills after other high-profile tragedies like the George Floyd murder. Senator TIM SCOTT, on our side—the Senator from South Carolina—led those efforts. I was proud to work with him in crafting something called the JUSTICE Act, which would reform, retrain, and restore trust in America's police officers, something that I believe is very important. This package of bills included a number of initiatives to improve accountability and transparency and deliver real change to our communities across the country.

I remember, after the George Floyd murder, I asked my friends, the mayor of Houston and the mayor of Dallas, if they would assemble a group of community leaders so that I could better understand what the relationship was, particularly between communities of

color and the police in those cities. It was pretty eye-opening. While many young people and many not so young people are raised to believe that the police are their friends and people you could depend on and call if you are in trouble, in some communities, there is a lack of trust and confidence in the police because of a very different experience that they have had in those communities.

I believe there still is a broad bipartisan appetite for these types of reforms that were included in the JUSTICE Act. I was optimistic that we could, at the time, pass a police reform bill that was desperately needed, but when Leader McCONNELL tried to bring that bill to the floor, our Democratic colleagues blocked it. That is right. They blocked it. They refused to allow the Senate to even debate or consider this legislation.

Strangely enough, this package included a bill by Senator BOOKER and then-Senator KAMALA HARRIS to make lynching a Federal crime, but they voted to block the consideration of the bill that included their bill to make lynching a Federal crime. It just didn't make any sense to me then, and it doesn't make any sense to me now.

This would have strengthened the use and accountability for body cameras—I am talking about the bigger bill now, of course—improved access to deescalation training and duty-to-intervene training, and established two commissions to give us a better understanding and recommendations on the challenges that needed to be addressed in the long run. But, as I said, our colleagues across the aisle blocked it. This important point is worth remembering now as our Democratic colleagues renew their call for police reform.

Now, in light of the filibuster of the JUSTICE Act, I introduced a standalone bill that included deescalation provisions from Senator SCOTT's legislation, and I worked with my colleague Senator WHITEHOUSE on a bipartisan bill that was signed into law last December. So at least that piece of the JUSTICE Act did become law. It was signed into law by President Biden.

Deescalation training is very important. That doesn't mean that rogue police officers will always follow their training. Indeed, these officers, if they were trained to deescalate these conflicts, certainly did not follow their training, and they will be held accountable, as they should be, by the prosecutors who will bring charges against them. But it bears repeating that Republicans tried to bring a police reform bill to the floor 2½ years ago, and our Democratic colleagues stood in the way.

#### DEBT CEILING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, on another matter, today, President Biden and Speaker MCCARTHY will sit down to discuss options to avoid a debt crisis and rein in government spending.

The one thing that President Biden and Speaker MCCARTHY agree on is that we cannot breach the debt ceiling. I guess that is at least a start. From there, there doesn't seem to be a lot of common ground, not yet anyway. With a potential default on the horizon, this topic has gotten a lot of attention, but as we all know, America's debt crisis didn't appear overnight. It has been building for decades.

As I have said before and will say again, Republicans and Democrats have not exactly covered themselves with glory when it comes to deficit spending and increasing the debt. Washington has spent and spent with no meaningful steps to balance the budget. We are writing checks—spending money—that we know people of my generation will never have to pay back but that younger generations certainly will. That strikes me as profoundly immoral. The national debt has skyrocketed from \$3.2 trillion in 1980—\$3.2 trillion in 1980—to \$9.7 trillion in 2000 to \$31.5 trillion today.

I think it was Everett Dirksen who said, years ago, “A billion here, a billion there, and pretty soon you're talking about real money.” Nobody ever thought to use the T-word until recently.

During COVID-19, we worked together to avert a public health crisis and an economic catastrophe during the pandemic, and we did that on a bipartisan basis, but in the last 2 years, our Democratic colleagues have spent another \$2.5 trillion-plus in purely partisan spending bills: the so-called American Recovery Act and the Inflation Reduction Act.

There has been more than \$2.5 trillion in partisan spending, and the President takes the position that he won't even negotiate on the debt ceiling, when he is the one person whose signature is required to sign something into law. And by his signature, he has raised the debt more than \$2.5 trillion in partisan spending in the last 2 years, and he won't even negotiate? It strikes me as unsustainable and certainly irresponsible.

The President was happy to take a tour across America to brag about these costly bills, but when we hit the debt limit, he is nowhere to be seen. He is pointing the finger of blame at the Republican House of Representatives and at the Speaker and suggesting that, well, if you want to cut spending, tell us where you would cut.

Let's look at spending that the President and Democrats were solely responsible for. If we could cut back \$2½ trillion of spending, that would do a lot to address the current level of debt. But the President's position is, it is not my responsibility. I don't really care. And he wants to try to lay all of this at the feet of Speaker MCCARTHY. It is wildly inappropriate and irresponsible.

In short, President Biden has made clear that he expects Congress to raise the debt limit with no conditions at-

tached, but that also means to let this runaway spending and accumulating debt continue. That is the part he doesn't say but is implicit in his position.

Republicans have made clear that his position is untenable. For one, it is a matter of financial prudence. Congress can't raise the debt ceiling just to keep spending like there is no tomorrow. We need to get government spending in check, and the best way to do that is on a bipartisan basis. But there is also a matter of practicality.

Republicans now control the House, meaning that the only viable path to success means compromise. We have a divided government—that is what the midterm elections gave us. Some of my colleagues like to say that divided government is the best time to do hard things. I think that is true, but if it doesn't change behavior, those hard things never get addressed.

President Biden can roll out as many ultimatums as he wants, but the reality is his party no longer controls all the levers of government like it has during the last 2 years. And in order to avoid a debt crisis, which he said is nonnegotiable, he is going to have to work with Republicans.

Today's meeting with Speaker MCCARTHY is a start, but at minimum, I hope the President will walk back his statement about not negotiating and understand that he has no choice but to work with Republicans, just like Speaker MCCARTHY has no choice but to work with President Biden. That is the nature of a divided government that the voters gave us with the midterm elections, and we need to get serious about workable solutions.

Secretary Yellen has said she thinks that the government will not default before June, which means we have approximately 4 months to work this out. I hope today's meeting between the President and the Speaker marks the beginning of bipartisan negotiations, and I am eager to learn more about their discussion.

#### 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF SPACE SHUTTLE “COLUMBIA” ACCIDENT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, on a final matter, today marks a solemn anniversary for our country. Twenty years ago today, the Space Shuttle *Columbia* was making its return to Earth on the heels of a mission dubbed STS-107.

After 16 days in orbit, the shuttle was bound for Kennedy Space Center in Florida, where members of the astronauts' families and countless spectators gathered to watch its landing, which is always an exciting and inspiring sight.

The shuttle was traveling across the southern part of the United States, and as it crossed Texas on a beautiful Saturday morning, something terrible happened. Folks along the flight path stood in their yards, excited to watch a glimpse of *Columbia* returning from its 28th mission. They watched the orbiter streak across the sky at some 12,000



miles an hour, when, suddenly, they heard a loud noise and saw the shuttle begin to come apart.

We soon realized that the worst had happened: The shuttle broke into several pieces as it reentered Earth's atmosphere, and all seven astronauts aboard lost their lives.

The crew of *Columbia* included two Texans: Rick Husband and Willie McCool, along with Michael Anderson, Kalpana Chawla, David Brown, Laurel Clark, and Ilan Ramon. They were scheduled to land at Kennedy Space Center just 15 minutes after passing over Texas.

The disaster left a field of wreckage that stretched from Fort Worth, across East Texas, and into Louisiana. Texas is a big place, but that means virtually the whole breadth of our State was covered with wreckage.

The government, of course, immediately launched a massive search to recover pieces of the space shuttle in order to determine what went wrong. NASA officials, National Guard troops, and law enforcement at all levels began scouring the landscape to recover pieces of the shuttle. Divers from the Environmental Protection Agency led efforts to recover pieces that fell into the Toledo Bend Reservoir near Hemp-hill.

Some 25,000 volunteers from Texas and Louisiana helped search an area that covered 2.3 million acres. They ranged from college students at nearby Stephen F. Austin to teams of ham radio operators who helped law enforcement with communications. As Texans and Americans do, people from all walks of life came together at a time of tragedy and rallied behind a unified effort to help bring answers to a nation in mourning.

This tragedy happened just a couple of months into my first Senate term, and I witnessed this massive response effort in action.

In the aftermath, I visited an area in Nacogdoches, which is over in East Texas, where tents were set up by search teams. It was remarkable to see the dedication of men and women firsthand engaged in this effort.

Search crews battled the rain and cold temperatures as they combed through pine forests and underbrush searching for wreckage. Recovery teams and volunteers found everything from a 600-pound piece of a main engine to the sole of a spacesuit boot. These discoveries, of course, were crucial to the investigation, which helped NASA understand what went wrong and how we could prevent similar accidents from occurring in the future.

In the months and years since, the Agency underwent an extensive transformation of its culture and operations to improve the safety of future missions. Jon Clark, a former NASA flight surgeon, whose wife Laurel was killed on *Columbia* said:

Their sacrifice has evolved into a safer space program.

Those changes are no consolation for the families who lost loved ones 20

years ago today, but I hope they can find some comfort in the knowledge that these American heroes made a lasting impact on America's space program.

I appreciate the Texans who came together in the wake of this tragedy to preserve pieces of *Columbia* and provide NASA and these families with answers that they so earnestly sought. Their efforts, then and now, have helped make the Nation's space program safer and more successful.

As we mark the 20th anniversary of the loss of *Columbia*, I am proud to co-sponsor a Senate resolution to commemorate the loss of *Columbia* and honor its crew. I appreciate the bipartisan support of Senators on both sides of the aisle who have joined in this effort, and I hope the resolution will pass unanimously today.

Today, we pay tribute to seven courageous individuals who lost their lives aboard the Space Shuttle *Columbia*. We remember, we honor, and we celebrate their commitment to research, exploration, and the pursuit of the extraordinary. We honor their legacy by continuing to push the boundaries of scientific discovery and human space.

I yield the floor.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. ROSEN).

#### SUPPORTING THE OBSERVATION OF NATIONAL TRAFFICKING AND MODERN SLAVERY PREVENTION MONTH—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

#### INFLATION

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I rise today to discuss yet another of the consequences of President Biden's policies, and that is that prices are going up, the price hikes.

Families in West Virginia and across our Nation are struggling because the policies and priorities of these past 2 years have made essential items and goods seemingly unattainable. Whether it is gas, goods or services, energy prices, utility costs, small business expenses, owning a home, or simply affording to put food on the table, American families are squeezed at every turn.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, prices have risen 13.7 percent since President Biden took office. A recent report from the Heritage Foundation found that because of that staggering rise, the average American family has \$7,400 less in their pocket at the end of the year.

This is a timely topic today because the Federal Reserve has just an-

nounced the eighth consecutive interest rate hike they have had to deploy in order to curb this administration's 2-year spending spree which is fueling our high-inflation economy. But an interest rate hike—once reserved as a measure that sends a direct signal to policymakers—is just another Wednesday in this President's America.

Chairman Powell warned last August that the continued interest rate increases and inflationary pressures would bring "pain to households and businesses." And, boy, does that ring true today. Meanwhile, President Biden continues to laud small inflation changes and slowed economic growth, but he refuses to recognize his administration's role in the record-high prices that the American middle class is continuing to have to face or the further economic fallout Americans are likely to face—projected by many economists—later this year from interest rate hikes in the past year.

So let's just dive into this a little bit. Whether it is a conversation with Senate colleagues, waiting in line at a store, or a constituent calling my office, the cost of food remains a central topic of concern all across this Nation. According to the most recent reports from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the cost of groceries went up 11.8 percent from the year prior. You hear about it with meat, eggs, bread, and butter—all the essentials. To add to this, the cost of restaurant purchases is up 8.4 percent. In fact, the price of every food category has continued to grow at a faster rate than its historical average.

A recent PBS analysis also points out that America's rural population is experiencing their cost of living going up faster and lingering longer than those in urban areas, and that is a factor that disproportionately impacts people in my State of West Virginia. In the words of one West Virginian who wrote in to my office, "How are we supposed to keep our houses warm and food on the table?"

Speaking of housing, it remains unaffordable. Because of President Biden's price hikes, fixed mortgage rates rose from 3.4 percent in January of 2022 to over double, 7.12 percent, in a matter of months. The National Association of Realtors' Housing Affordability Index dipped below 100, signifying that average American families do not have enough money to qualify for a mortgage on a median-priced home. In other words, new families and hard-working individuals who made smart financial decisions with the hope of purchasing a home can no longer pursue that dream because it is out of reach; it is unaffordable.

Moving to energy—something that is absolutely central to the proud history and tradition of our State, my State—despite the recent downturn in energy prices, it can't be forgotten that Americans are still paying 30 percent more for energy, and at its peak in June of 2022, it was 70 percent more. With costs



like this becoming more mainstream—actually, gas is going up just recently—American families are having to choose again between keeping their lights on, filling their car with gas, or buying groceries.

This is not only unfair, but it is avoidable. It is avoidable for folks living in a country with as many resources as we have right here in the United States. It also shows the direct impact on our families when leaders turn their backs on American energy.

Additionally, the U.S. manufacturing industry has not been exempt from the economic woes created by this administration. The Institute for Supply Management's manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index—that is a big clump of words there—fell into contraction category in November and December of 2022. Meanwhile, despite this, President Biden has been touting a historic manufacturing boom that doesn't really exist. The reality is, U.S. manufacturers may be on their way to a recession, and the downturn will likely deepen as purchasing power decreases and interest rates continue to rise, as they did today. This further demonstrates how out of touch the administration is from the devastating reality that American businesses are grappling with.

So if you don't believe me—I hope you do, but if you don't believe me, take it from my constituents. Back home, they write frequently to express the middle-class squeeze they are feeling. Erwin from Mercer County in Southern West Virginia said that the current economic condition has created a choice for him between driving to work and feeding his family.

Paige from Buckhannon said something similar. She said:

I have full time jobs and two children. I'm tearful because I sit here [wondering and] looking at upcoming bills and I'm having to . . . pay a bill or buy groceries.

Ronald from Cabell County, over in the Huntington area:

How do you propose that I continue to be able to live with increasing food prices—gasoline prices—and the ever-increasing utility costs?

Jeremy in Raleigh County told me:

My electric bill at my residence is double the cost of my mortgage every month. This is not sustainable. I will go bankrupt just trying to keep the lights on.

But this isn't just impacting Jeremy because Jeremy is a great family man and a great friend, and he is trying to help his friends, neighbors, and family pay their electric bills as well.

So I am continuously inspired by this kindness that I see and the generosity of West Virginians toward one another, but it shouldn't have to come to this.

So my question to President Biden this week is, When is enough enough? Even in areas where we have prices that are decreasing in recent months, President Biden is trying to take credit when, in actuality, prices are still much, much higher than when he took office.

Now more than ever, American families need leadership, not misleading messages and attempts to take credit when it is not deserved. American families are asking for a path out from the hole created by the price hikes my colleagues and I will continue to highlight on the Senate floor today.

With that, I see Senator HYDE-SMITH from the great State of Mississippi here to talk about, I am sure, similar issues. She has been a champion of affordability and the middle-class worker to try to help meet these very challenges that I outlined. So I welcome her.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Madam President, in less than a week, President Biden will deliver his State of the Union Address to the Nation. In the buildup to that speech, we are already seeing the President and his administration spinning a tale about just how wonderful things are in this country, particularly after they took power and racked up more than \$3 trillion more in spending. Unfortunately, those tall tales do not reflect the reality for the people in my home State of Mississippi or across the Nation.

In the 2 years since President Biden took office, we have seen his administration fail the American people time and time again. Inflation was 1.4 percent in January of 2021, but the policies the President has forced on this Nation since then have made daily living unaffordable for families. Today, a strong majority of Americans—more than 70 percent—believe that the country is on the wrong track, and it is easy to understand why. Too many workers and families now live paycheck to paycheck, trying to keep the lights on, put food on the table, get gas in their cars, and stock up on everyday essentials that they have to have.

President Biden's inflationary runaway spending is a root cause of the skyrocketed prices we are paying for all goods and services. Not a single industry is spared the cost of this inflation. Since Joe Biden took office, higher prices have cost families an additional \$10,000, and there seems to be no end in sight. Prices have gone up across the board to 13.5 percent, and grocery costs have jumped 18.6 percent. Just look at the price of essential staples: Chicken breast prices have gone up by 33 percent, and ground beef, whole milk, and bread have gone up by 21 percent.

Unlike President Biden, I actually have to take a trip to the grocery store to feed my family. I do all of my own shopping, and I see firsthand how these price increases affect the people of Mississippi. In the checkout line, I have watched a mother forced to put something back on the shelf after realizing that she can't afford everything in her cart. I have seen a retired husband grabbing only the barest necessities for the week. Up and down the aisle, as I push my buggy, the conversation is

constant on "Can you believe how much the price of groceries has increased and how expensive it is?"

It breaks my heart to see the individuals in my community and the Nation struggling to get by. It shouldn't be this way, but in Joe Biden's America, you are forced to weigh priorities on buying groceries, prescription medicine, or putting gas in your car.

When it comes to energy prices, the hardship continues for many Americans. This pain is 100 percent self-inflicted by the Biden administration's stubborn refusal to maximize American energy production. According to census data, about 22 percent of American households could not pay their energy bill last year. When families were actually able to pay, they had to sacrifice other necessities, such as groceries, their medicine, or their gasoline.

This winter isn't bringing any relief either. Compared to last winter, the average household will spend upwards of 28 percent more to heat their home with natural gas, according to the Energy Information Administration. Electricity rates are also expected to continue to rise due to lower domestic supply of liquefied natural gas as well as labor shortages and the cost of materials. But this should come as no surprise since the attack on American energy began on day one of the Biden Presidency. In fact, this administration's regulatory overreach also contributes to rising costs across our economy.

Despite record-high prices, Joe Biden wants to further regulate the agriculture industry. The Food Safety and Inspection Service, for instance, is studying line speeds of poultry plants with the ultimate goal of just slowing them down, which will affect costs and supplies in the grocery stores. In addition, the EPA recently unveiled its new waters of the United States rule, which will further hamper the ability of farmers to grow food because the Federal Government will have the ability to regulate ditches and low spots on private land.

It is a basic fact that it is expensive to comply with overly burdensome regulations. The Biden administration's desire to overregulate everything makes it seem as if the President wants Americans to struggle to afford food.

Madam President, the American people are smart, and they understand when things aren't going well.

The rosy stories the White House will barrage us with before the State of the Union Address won't change the fact that the American dream seems further from attainable for hard-working families because we just cannot afford Joe Biden.

My colleagues and I want to get our economy back on track to relieve the financial stress that families are experiencing. We must stop the irresponsible government spending, unleash

American energy production, cut regulations, and embrace pro-growth commonsense policies. The American people deserve that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I am pleased to rise today and join my colleagues from West Virginia and Mississippi, and I join them to, once again, call attention to the disastrous effects of President Biden's price hikes and his policies.

Americans are facing soaring inflation that has not been seen in generations. Price increases families are seeing at the grocery store, at the pump, in monthly electric bills, and for basic housing needs have far outpaced wage gains and left Americans struggling to make ends meet.

The numbers speak for themselves. In 2022, annual average inflation reached 8 percent, the highest level in 40 years. Rather than working to solve the problem, the Biden administration seems set on making it worse. You don't need to look any further than your kitchen to find the latest example.

In 2022, the food-at-home price index, which measures grocery prices, rose 18.6 percent—18.6 percent—reaching heights not seen since the Carter administration. This rise in food prices is directly related to increases in the cost of production faced by our hard-working farmers and ranchers.

These increases are driven by the Biden administration's continued regulatory overreach, failure to empower our domestic energy producers, and failed economic policies. Our producers are facing increased prices for diesel fuel, fertilizer, and for crop protection products, and more. New regulations from this administration threaten to drive up the cost of production even further.

The recently published "Waters of the United States," or WOTUS, is a prime example of regulations that will stifle our agriculture and energy industries and make inflation worse. Instead of this disastrous rule—this WOTUS rule—we should take a States-first approach to protect our land and water that respects private property rights. This comes on top of the administration's misguided approach to domestic energy production, which has caused us to increase our reliance on foreign energy suppliers, which has increased the price of the gallon of gasoline by more than \$1 since the administration took office—more than \$1 a gallon.

We should be empowering our domestic energy producers, including those in my State of North Dakota, to restore our energy independence, reduce our reliance on foreign oil imports, create more jobs here at home, and help reduce prices for consumers. We need to unleash America's vast energy reserves. That is the right solution to lower prices and help provide hard-working families and businesses relief

from the record inflation that has been caused by the policies of the Biden administration.

The Biden administration needs to stop doubling down on failed economic policies. The administration needs to get government out of the way and focus on the fundamentals. That includes increased domestic energy production, securing our border, and taking meaningful action to reduce inflation.

I yield the floor.

S. RES. 21

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the resolution designating January as "National Trafficking and Modern Slavery Prevention Month."

I am proud to introduce this resolution every year to raise awareness about the ongoing atrocities of human trafficking. We must continue to support the ongoing partnerships between governments, nonprofits, service providers, and survivors, who are all working to end human trafficking.

The human trafficking industry generates an estimated \$150 billion in illegal profits a year. And human trafficking impacts 50 million victims around the world. Many of the victims of human trafficking are often difficult to identify and are subjected to manipulation, force, fraud, and abuse. We cannot turn a blind eye to ongoing exploitation and forced labor in our country and throughout the world. We have a responsibility to raise awareness of these horrendous acts, ensure victims understand that they are not alone, and provide legislative solutions to support and protect survivors.

Last Congress, I was able to work with my Senate colleagues to reauthorize the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. By designating January as "National Trafficking and Modern Slavery Prevention Month," we will shine a light on the issue and continue the bipartisan charge to end trafficking and exploitation.

I respectfully ask my colleagues to support this resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The senior Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that we start the vote immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE ON S. RES. 21

The question is on adoption of S. Res. 21.

Ms. SMITH. Can we have the yeas and nays, please?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator

from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

The result was announced—yeas 97, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 4 Leg.]

YEAS—97

Baldwin	Graham	Peters
Barrasso	Grassley	Reed
Bennet	Hagerty	Ricketts
Blackburn	Hassan	Risch
Blumenthal	Hawley	Romney
Booker	Heinrich	Rosen
Boozman	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Braun	Hirono	Sanders
Britt	Hoeven	Schatz
Brown	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Budd	Johnson	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Scott (FL)
Capito	Kelly	Scott (SC)
Cardin	Kennedy	Shaheen
Carper	King	Sinema
Casey	Klobuchar	Smith
Cassidy	Lankford	Stabenow
Collins	Lee	Sullivan
Coons	Lujan	Tester
Cornyn	Lummis	Thune
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Tillis
Cotton	Markey	Tuberville
Cramer	Marshall	Van Hollen
Crapo	McConnell	Vance
Cruz	Menendez	Warner
Daines	Merkley	Warnock
Duckworth	Moran	Warren
Durbin	Mullin	Welch
Ernst	Murphy	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murray	Wicker
Fetterman	Ossoff	Young
Fischer	Padilla	
Gillibrand	Paul	

NOT VOTING—3

Murkowski Rubio Wyden

The resolution (S. Res. 21) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). Under the previous order, the preamble is agreed to and the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

## MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time to celebrate the success of the Affordable Care Act. We just completed the open enrollment period for 2023. Over 16 million Americans signed up for health coverage under the Affordable Care Act. That is about a 100-percent increase from the first year's enrollment in 2014. In less than 10 years, we have doubled the number of enrollees under the Affordable Care Act.

It has contributed to a substantial reduction in the number of uninsured, which, in and of itself, is an important goal in healthcare. Uninsured individuals have less ability to access quality

care in this country. That is something we all need to be concerned about and do our best to make sure everyone has access to healthcare.

But they also contribute to what is known as cost-shifting, and it causes a dislocation of healthcare facilities in the proper locations in our community. It also makes our healthcare system less efficient. If an individual does not have coverage for preventive healthcare and diseases are discovered later, it makes it more expensive and less likely a successful result.

We all can celebrate the numbers but recognize we also are taking a big bite out of the uninsured medical population in this country. My numbers in Maryland are very impressive: 180,000 Marylanders enrolled in our State insurance exchange under the Affordable Care Act. That is, by the way, for minorities, a 9-percent increase in the Hispanic population and a 3-percent increase in the Black population. We are committed to eliminating health disparities in America.

There are many provisions in the Affordable Care Act. I want to mention one I am particularly proud of because I had something to do with its creation, and that is elevating the National Institutes of Health with the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. We made it a full Institute under NIH. We set up an office for minority health within the Health and Human Services Agencies. We did this so there would be a focus on dealing with the systemic challenges we have to medical care in this country. And the research that is being done by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities is cutting edge on reasons why we have disparities in this country, and it is leading to corrective action being taken.

I will just give you one example: NIH UNITE Program, which deals with incentives to create a more diversified workforce in healthcare, which is critically important to access, as well as to make sure that clinical trials include all of our population so that the results are meaningful for all communities in America.

The results that we have been able to move forward in bridging the disparities for access to healthcare in America, all this has been done under the Affordable Care Act.

But we didn't stop there. We recognized we had to improve the Affordable Care Act. I am very proud of the leadership of President Biden and the Democrats in our initiatives under the American Rescue Plan and the Inflation Reduction Act. We enhance the subsidies to make it affordable for all Americans to be able to purchase their insurance through the health exchanges. We made that a commitment so every American could have access to affordable, quality healthcare.

We need to make those enhancements permanent so we still have work to do. I want to thank our colleague

Senator SHAHEEN for her leadership in legislation, which I strongly support, that would make the enhancements in the subsidies under the Affordable Care Act permanent so that we can keep having these impressive numbers of Americans enrolling in health insurance.

Americans are benefiting from the Affordable Care Act, not just in having comprehensive, affordable insurance coverage but also the quality of that coverage. No longer do they have to worry about exclusions for preexisting conditions. It wasn't too long ago that just about everyone in this country was concerned as to whether their insurance coverage would cover their entire healthcare needs because they had a prior episode sometime in their life. Women were concerned whether childbirth was a preexisting condition. Well, we eliminated that fear with the Affordable Care Act in that insurance companies cannot exclude coverage or limit coverage based upon preexisting conditions.

And as you recall, the leading cause of bankruptcy in America was unpaid medical bills. But under the Affordable Care Act, we eliminated lifetime and yearly caps on the coverage that you have—again, helping American families deal with their healthcare needs.

There is still more to be done. I want to acknowledge that. We need to do some things.

I want to say, first, that I was pleased that under the Inflation Reduction Act, we were able to reduce the cost of prescription drugs. Insulin, starting last month—January—was limited to \$35 a month. That was a game changer for millions of Americans to know they have an affordable supply of insulin to deal with their needs. That has already taken effect. And included in the Inflation Reduction Act will be a cap on Part D out-of-pocket expenses of no more than \$2,000 a year. So we are also capping today the unlimited exposures seniors had on prescription medicines.

I must tell you, we passed legislation—as I think everybody here is aware of—under the Inflation Reduction Act, to start, by 2026, doing something that most Americans would be shocked that we are not doing today: negotiate prices with the pharmaceutical industry, using our market share to bring down the cost of medicines so American consumers are not gouged compared to the international marketplace. Starting in 2026, we will have negotiated the price, starting with the 10 most expensive drugs in this country.

I want to mention an area where I think we need to do more. I have been very much engaged in oral healthcare. Most people know that when I came to the Senate in 2006, a year later, Deamonte Driver, a youngster in Prince George's County, lost his life because he couldn't get access to oral healthcare. I made that a crusade with my former colleague, the late Elijah

Cummings, in trying to do something about that. I am pleased that both the Affordable Care Act and the Children's Health Insurance Program require coverage for pediatric dental care. That is a step in the right direction, but we haven't completed the needs that are out there.

If you neglect your oral healthcare, you are likely to be neglecting your general healthcare. It is an area where we can prevent a lot of illness and problems. Most dental problems are preventable if you have access to dental care.

I have introduced legislation that would remove any annual or lifetime limit on oral healthcare under the Children's Health Insurance Program, the CHIP program. I want to thank Senator STABENOW for joining me in this effort. To me, this is something that is very consistent with the Affordable Care Act, and I hope that we will be able to get that passed.

But we also have to expand coverage. Medicaid coverage for dental care is primarily determined by the States, and many States limit coverage to emergency dental care, which means people, many families, can't afford their normal checkups for the adults who are in the family. We must do better as a nation. We need to expand Medicaid to cover oral healthcare. And for the 37 million seniors who are on Medicare, many cannot afford their dental annual visits. We need to expand Medicare to cover dental care as well. I want to thank my friend Senator SANDERS for his leadership, also, on that particular issue. The bottom line: Let us all work together so that we can achieve the goal of the Affordable Care Act. We have achieved a great deal to date by the passage of that bill, but we still need to do more to make sure healthcare is a right and not a privilege and that every American has access to affordable, quality care. Working together, we can achieve that goal.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.  
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### DEBT CEILING

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, let me begin with a simple statement which I hope every Senator in this body agrees with: that the United States of America pays its bills on time.

We have since our Nation was founded. We never default on our debts. We always pay what we owe. We honor our financial obligations to all Americans and all those who invest in the American economy. And because we pay our bills on time, the United States has earned a reputation as a reliable, credible, and trustworthy partner around

the world, and that helps every single American and our entire economy.

Now, as everybody in this Chamber knows, in order to maintain the full faith and credit of the United States, we have to raise the debt ceiling. And this is not about new spending. This is about paying the bills that are already due and already owing under the laws that we have already passed in this country and that have already been signed by Presidents of both parties.

When Donald Trump was President of the United States, Republicans voted with Democrats to raise the debt limit three times, and the U.S. Congress has raised the debt limit a total of 78 times since 1960, under both Democratic and Republican Presidents.

If the Government of the United States had failed to raise the debt ceiling in the past, we would have faced an economic catastrophe. Think about it this way: You wouldn't just wake up one day and decide not to make your mortgage payment or not to make your car payment. You pay what you owe. It is as simple as that.

And you know that, if you were to wake up one morning and say that you are not paying your mortgage or you are not paying your car payment, you will face consequences. If you don't pay your mortgage, you could have your home foreclosed on. If you don't pay your car payments, your car can be repossessed.

The same logic applies to the U.S. Government, but the consequences are not confined to just one individual or one homeowner or one car owner. If the United States fails to pay its bills on time, every American—everyone inside this room and everyone outside this room—will suffer the consequences. We are not talking about risking foreclosure on one house or losing one car. We are talking about the economy of our country grinding to a halt. If the United States stops paying our bills, our economy takes a nose dive. It is as simple as that.

When I talk to my colleagues here on the Senate floor, both Republicans and Democrats, they agree that it is a no-brainer. You pay what you owe. You raise the debt ceiling. You don't default. It is common sense.

In fact, I was listening just the other day to Republican leader Senator MCCONNELL, who said:

America must never default on its debt.

He said that a few days ago. I agree.

But across and on the other side of the Capitol, in the House of Representatives, Speaker MCCARTHY and the new majority, composed of some very right-wing and extreme Members, are taking their orders from former President Donald Trump, the same Donald Trump who as President signed three debt limit increases into law. Now he wants Republicans to use the debt limit as a club against President Biden.

House Republicans are stalling our efforts right now to pay our bills on time, even though they know—just as Senator MCCONNELL knows, just as

every Senator here knows—that failing to do so would result in chaos and calamity for the country. It is a threat designed to force the rest of the U.S. Congress into enacting an extreme rightwing agenda.

So let's be very clear. Here is what House Republicans are saying. They are saying: You do what we want or else we will tank the American economy.

I think anybody hearing that proposition would recognize it for what it is—a form of economic terrorism. But MAGA Republicans are holding the full faith and credit of the United States hostage to impose their agenda on the American people. They have decided to politicize what should be a nonpartisan issue because Democrats and Republicans in the House and the Senate have voted for programs to require us to raise the debt ceiling in the past.

In fact, I think it would be important to know that we would not be here at this time, on the Senate floor, having hit the debt ceiling and trying to work to make sure we avoid actually going over the cliff—we would not be here—if it was not for the tax cuts that were passed during the Trump administration. We would not be here at this particular moment. And, in fact, 25 percent of the total national debt was accumulated during the Trump administration—25 percent of the total debt of the United States, during the Trump administration.

Now, I want to be clear, I am not saying this is all Republican debt, but it certainly is not all Democratic debt. This is the debt of the country. This is the debt owed by Uncle Sam.

And what does the Constitution of the United States tell us about how we treat America's debt?

Well, here is the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution right here, and what it says is this:

The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for the payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned.

The Fourteenth Amendment passed shortly after the Civil War, and it is crystal clear that the obligation to pay America's debts is not a Democratic obligation; it is not a Republican obligation. It is an American obligation, and beyond being the right thing to do, it is in the Constitution of the United States. It is a national duty and a constitutional duty.

So, as I listen to Speaker MCCARTHY and his Republican House colleagues, they want us to ignore the Fourteenth Amendment. They want to impose their reckless policies on the rest of us under threat of our doing what they want us to do. So I do want to be clear about what the consequences of this would be.

I talked in general terms about economic catastrophe. Here is what it would mean. It would mean seniors going without Social Security benefits.

It can mean troops going for weeks or even months without pay—the men and women in uniform who are out there protecting our country. Medicare may not be able to cover the costs of a doctor's visit. Those are just some of the governmental functions that could come to a grinding halt if we don't pay our debts on time, and we don't know the full extent of what would happen because, as I said, we have never been there before. This is uncharted territory.

Economists estimate a very dire toll: 3 million jobs lost; \$130,000 added to the cost of your average 30-year mortgage. I want everyone to hear that. The mortgage costs for homeowners would go up. And, of course, as the mortgage costs for homeowners go up, the value of everyone who has already got a House also goes down. Retirement accounts in free fall, skyrocketing borrowing costs on car loans, and we would be hit by this catastrophe just as we are recovering from the economic hit we took during the pandemic. And it would trigger an increase in costs just as we are beginning to turn the corner on inflation.

So why would anyone do this? Why would someone threaten to do this?

I have been listening very carefully to Speaker MCCARTHY and Republicans in the House, and they say that they want to reduce the deficit and the national debt. That is what they say, but this is one of those situations where you always say: Watch what they do, not what they say.

The reality is that Republicans, through their actions and their records, don't care about the deficit and the debt. That is not their priority because, if they really cared about the deficit and the debt, they would not have passed the 2017 Trump tax cuts without a plan to pay for them—a tax cut, by the way, which disproportionately benefited the very, very rich and big multinational corporations—because that tax cut, that giveaway to the very wealthy and big corporations, it increased the deficit by \$2 trillion over 10 years, added to our national debt.

As I said, we wouldn't even be here today, at this point in time, but for the fact that Republicans increased the deficit by \$2 trillion. By the way, that is not my estimate, that \$2 trillion. That is from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

And if Republicans really cared about reducing the deficit and debt, they could have joined us, just last year, when we closed a number of loopholes for big corporations, a measure that reduces the deficit by \$238 billion over the next 10 years. That is something Democrats did. We didn't have a single Republican vote here in the Senate or in the House for that.

And if Republicans really cared about reducing the deficit and debt, the Republican-controlled House of Representatives would not, as one of their very first measures, have passed a law

to slash the funding that the IRS desperately needs to enforce the law against wealthy tax cheats.

Let me say that again. They cut the moneys that the IRS needs to enforce current tax law against very wealthy Americans and big corporations that are not paying what they owe today. They are getting away with cheating on their taxes, and Republicans cut the money that the IRS needs to go after them. And this is very explicitly, as the Secretary of Treasury said, talking about Americans who earn more than \$400,000 every year, including lots of multimillionaires and billionaires in the country.

So when you say the IRS can no longer have the funds to go after wealthy tax cheats, what happens? You collect less revenue from very wealthy people. And what happens when you collect less revenue from very wealthy people? You increase the deficit. In fact, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office says that the action the House already took would increase the deficit by over \$114 billion. This is from the Republicans in the House who are now threatening the United States not pay its bills, claiming that they care about the deficit and debt, when one of the very first actions that they took was to increase it. So that is just not the case. Their actions indicate that they don't care about the deficit.

What is it really about? So what Republicans are really after is attacking critical investments that support the American people and that help strengthen our country. As one Republican strategist, Grover Norquist, once said, it is about shrinking the government down to the size where you can "drown it in the bathtub."

This House Republican majority is desperate to cut and decimate programs that Americans need and that our future requires. So, for example, they want to cut some of the new initiatives we undertook to supercharge American innovation. We passed legislation, the CHIPS and Science Act, designed to maintain our technological edge over China and others. They want to cut it. They want to roll back investments that we made that are already bringing more high-tech manufacturing jobs back to the United States. We want to ensure those manufacturing jobs. They want to continue to offshore those good jobs. They want to cut investments we are making in clean energy that will help us fight the climate crisis, strengthen the American workforce, and, yes, also help us better compete around the globe, where China has a huge headstart when it comes to things like electric batteries. They want to cut Pell grants, which help millions of Americans pursue a college degree. They want to cut investments we are finally making to modernize our national infrastructure—something that was very bipartisan here in the U.S. Senate. That is important for our roads, our bridges, our transit systems, our ports, our air-

ports. They want to cut it. Some are talking about cutting Medicare and Social Security.

That is just a partial list of what the House Republicans are threatening to do, and they are saying that if we don't all agree to that, they are not going to allow the United States to pay its bills on time.

The bottom line here is, when you look at the Republican playbook, it is cutting investments that are important to the American people and important to the success of our country while pushing for more tax cuts for the superwealthy. This is not a new movie; this is a rerun; this is trickle-down economics. It is the same old playbook, and here they go again.

But here is the thing: We have been here before. Some of us were here when this threat was last made. I vividly remember the year 2011. It was another moment when the Republicans were fresh—fresh—after winning a majority in the House of Representatives. I was in the House at the time. Then, as now, the Republicans said they really cared about the deficit and the debt. Then, as now, they threatened that they wouldn't pay the bills on time. They wouldn't vote to pay the country's bills on time.

I remember back then that we sat down with them in good faith. President Obama tapped Vice President Biden to lead the budget negotiations, and a small bipartisan and bicameral group of us was selected to try to hammer out a plan. I was part of those discussions. They took place just off the floor here, down the hall, less than 15 yards away. We worked week after week after week, and we negotiated to try to hammer out an agreement.

But here is what became very clear: The Republican objective then, as now, was not to reduce the deficit and the debt. The Republican objective was simply to cut investments in important areas. They didn't want to raise one penny—not one dime—to reduce the deficit or debt by closing tax breaks for very wealthy people. That was then. This is the same story today.

If you look at the list of things they did back then—no cutting tax breaks for the wealthy, cutting important programs, including Medicare, were very much part of their agenda—we got very close to tripping over the final cliff of the debt ceiling. Like today, we had already hit the debt ceiling, and the Treasury Department was taking extraordinary measures to prevent us from actually defaulting on our debts. In fact, we got so close to actually not paying our bills on time that the S&P downgraded America's credit for the first time in our history. They said: You are getting very close to the place where creditors of the United States aren't going to anymore support the United States. They are not going to buy U.S. bonds. In fact, interest rates began to creep up just because of that when we got so close to the cliff. We came very close to going over that waterfall and crashing the economy.

So many of us learned a valuable lesson that day. I learned it, and I know that then-Vice President, now-President Biden learned it, and that is that you don't negotiate over whether or not the United States pays its bills on time, because all of us, Democrats and Republicans alike, have an obligation and a responsibility to do that.

We also learned something I want to be equally clear about. We are not against negotiating about the budget. We are happy to sit down anytime with Republican colleagues and the Speaker of the House to negotiate all aspects of the budget. We can talk about spending levels, and we can talk about revenue levels. In fact, we have a budget process here. If Speaker MCCARTHY and his colleagues want to do this under the regular process and do it in a bipartisan way, they have to pass a budget resolution. They outline where they want to make cuts. I don't expect them to outline any proposed increases in revenue, but that is the place they would do that. Then we will have a debate. I serve on the Senate Budget Committee. I would look forward to that. I do look forward to that. I serve on the Appropriations Committee where we decide on expenditures. That is the forum for negotiation.

The Democrats are for negotiating on the budget. We welcome that. Then the American people would see exactly what everyone's budget priorities are. They would see that the Republicans want to protect tax breaks for the very wealthy while they want to cut investments that are very important to middle America. They would see all of that during the budget process, but they want to short circuit that process. They, instead, want to say that they are not going to vote to pay our bills on time unless we all agree to their radical agenda. We are saying we are happy to negotiate—let's have a budget negotiation—but the negotiation isn't that you get everything you want in exchange for the Democrats' joining you to vote to pay our bills on time.

We didn't do that when President Trump was in office. As I said, we voted three times to raise the debt limit. We didn't say: You have got to accept all of our proposed efforts to get rid of tax breaks for the very wealthy. Yet what they are saying is that we have got to accept their approach to deep cuts to important investments in order for them to do what all of us have an obligation under the Constitution to do, which is to pay our bills on time.

So I hope all of us will do the simple thing—mandated in the Constitution—as Americans, not as Democrats or Republicans. As Americans, let's pay our bills on time, and let's not crash our economy. Yes, as part of the normal budget process, let's have a conversation about spending and about revenue, but don't do it while, at the same time, you are saying you are not going to let the United States pay our bills on time.

As I said in my opening remarks, we have always paid our bills on time. If you don't do it, really bad things happen to all Americans. So let's get that done, and then let's have our conversation about budget priorities.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The Senator from Texas.

### CHINA

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I rise today to speak about a gross miscarriage of justice—the imprisonment of Mark Swidan by the Government of China and the Chinese Communist Party.

Mark is from Luling, a small city in my home State of Texas. His mother, Ms. Katherine Swidan, still lives in Luling, while Mark eventually became a resident of Houston, my hometown. For over 10 years, Katherine has been waging a desperate battle to see her son again.

In 2012, Mark traveled to China on a business trip, which turned into a nightmare. On November 13, 2012, Mark was abducted by China's Public Security Bureau while he was taking his family back home. A witness to the abduction has said that Mark was detained because Chinese officials wanted to view the contents of his cell phone.

Mark was accused of being a part of a criminal conspiracy with 11 other individuals to manufacture and traffic drugs—charges that Mark has denied and which have been debunked over and over again.

Chinese authorities tried to coerce Mark into confessing. He refused, and he pleaded not guilty in a trial that occurred in November 2013. During the trial, the prosecution didn't produce any forensic evidence to back up their allegations, and no drugs were found on Mark or in his hotel room. Records in Mark's passport showed that he wasn't even in China during the time of the alleged offenses, and the 11 other individuals indicted in relation to this alleged drug conspiracy couldn't identify Mark. Nevertheless, outrageously, in 2019, a Chinese court sentenced Mark to death.

Mark remains unjustly detained today. He is suffering in a Chinese prison right now, as we speak. In prison, Mark has been kept in deplorable, abusive conditions. His jailers seek to break his will and break his faith. They have confiscated his Bible and his rosary. Mark's cell exposes him to extreme heat and extreme cold. He is deprived of sleep and subjected to physical abuse. He is in danger of high blood pressure, skin infections, and asthma. He has lost more than 100 pounds. His health is dire. Throughout all of this, Mark has been denied access to his family and access to American diplomats.

Mark has communicated with his mother, and his mother has told me and told the world that the Chinese communist government has failed to

break Mark's faith, which remains strong.

I spoke with Mark's mother earlier this week. This is a mom whose heart is breaking. This is a mom who wants to see her son again. This is a mom who wants to hold and hug and care for the son she loves.

The treatment of Mark has been atrocious, so much so that even the United Nations has called on China to release him. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention—a U.N. group of human rights experts who investigate cases of arbitrary detention around the world—found that Mark is being held in violation of customary international law and international norms, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The world can see that the Chinese Communist Party is trying to use hostages and hostage taking as a tool of statecraft. The Chinese Communist Party says they want to be taken seriously as a great power and a great nation, and they say they want to be respected on the global stage. But their treatment of Mark is not how great nations and great powers behave; their treatment of Mark is how third-world despots act.

I have drafted and this week introduced a resolution calling on the Chinese Government and the Chinese Communist Party to immediately release Mark. I am joined by my colleague from Texas, Senator CORNYN, and by Representative CLOUD from Texas in the House, who has introduced the same resolution in the House of Representatives. This resolution not only calls for Mark's immediate release, it also condemns China for withholding from Mark access to his family and to proper medical care.

Furthermore, it calls on the Biden administration to prioritize efforts to secure Mark's release, both in their conversations with Chinese diplomats and in international forums. In a few days, Secretary of State Blinken will be in Beijing, and he will have an opportunity to finish the final chapter of this tragedy. I am calling on the Biden administration to use all of the tools at our disposal to secure Mark's release, and I am calling on the Government of China to finally release Mark.

This ordeal has to end. It has to end for Mark. It has to end for his mother. It has to end for his family. We must and will do more so that Mark can come home.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). The Senator from Nevada.

### AMENDING THE CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT TO FIX A TECHNICAL ERROR IN THE DEFINITIONS

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 223, introduced earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:  
A bill (S. 223) to amend the Controlled Substances Act to fix a technical error in the definitions.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 223) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 223

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

### SECTION 1. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT.

Section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (58) as paragraph (59);

(2) by redesignating the second paragraph designated as paragraph (57) (relating to the definition of "serious drug felony") as paragraph (58); and

(3) by moving paragraphs (57), (58) (as so redesignated), and (59) (as so redesignated) 2 ems to the left.

### NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 11.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 11) designating the week of January 22 through January 28, 2023, as "National School Choice Week".

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 11) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of January 23, 2023, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

### CONGRATULATING THE SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY JACK-RABBITS ON WINNING THE 2023 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION I FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SUBDIVISION TITLE

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 22, submitted earlier today.



The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 22) congratulating the South Dakota State University Jackrabbits on winning the 2023 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Football Championship Subdivision title.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 22) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

#### MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 214 AND S. 219

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I understand there are two bills at the desk, and I ask for their first reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for the first time en bloc.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 214) to allow reciprocity for the carrying of certain concealed firearms.

A bill (S. 219) to provide that Members of Congress may not receive pay after October 1 of any fiscal year in which Congress has not approved a concurrent resolution on the budget and passed the regular appropriations bills.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading and object to my own request en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The bills will receive a second reading on the next legislative day.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

#### RECOGNIZING THE ARKANSAS MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. COMMISSION

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize and congratulate the Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission's 30th anniversary.

For three decades, the Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission has worked to promote and preserve the life and legacy of Dr. King in The Natural State and advocate the principles of nonviolence and equality among all citizens.

Dr. King devoted his life to pursuing equality and fighting injustice. His leadership of the civil rights movement ushered in a turning point in our country's history. His vision and influence will forever be part of America's identity.

Arkansas's MLK Jr. Commission works year-round teaching about the life of Dr. King and encouraging us all to take action to improve the lives of others. Through programs devoted to empowering individuals and communities, it has made a positive difference and inspired the next generation of leaders.

The commission organizes a number of community outreach projects that help further education, foster appreciation of history, and encourage youth to engage in positive leadership development right in their own neighborhoods and beyond. Notably, it hosts one of the largest national celebrations and day of service events in recognition of Dr. King.

It has been praised by Dr. Bernice King, daughter of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as one of the most active commissions in the country. In 2017, the group hosted what was coined a MegaKing Fest that emphasized a theme of "Passing the Torch" of the civil rights icon's legacy to future generations.

I am pleased to congratulate the Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission on this milestone of 30 years of service to our State. Dr. King's legacy and mission live on through its efforts and we are proud of what it represents and the impact is continues to make.

#### TRIBUTE TO LON PRIBBLE

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, today I am pleased to recognize the dedication of an exemplary civil servant, Mr. Lon Pribble, on the occasion of his upcoming retirement. Lon Pribble began his service to the Nation as a cadet in the U.S. Military Academy in 1979, serving as a military officer until his first retirement at the rank of lieutenant colonel in 2005. However, as a dedicated, energetic individual, he could not stay away from Army service for long. He soon began supporting the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, also known as ERDC, as a contractor analyst. In 2010, Lon became the director of government and legislative affairs for ERDC as a civil servant. My staff and I have had the pleasure of working with him ever since. In his role, Mr. Pribble has communicated the Army's emerging research priorities as well as how my constituents at ERDC help meet the needs of American warfighters. His deep knowledge of key legislative issues and advice to Army leaders and Members of Congress alike positively impacted the Army's interests with Congress. He has kept us informed about facility improvements, changes in the workforce, and partnerships that ERDC is developing throughout Mississippi and the rest of the Nation.

Part of the legacy Lon Pribble leaves at ERDC is an enhanced capability to meet critical Army research needs. He did this through his work supporting facility upgrades, such as construction of the Fragmentation Research Lab-

oratory, the Target Preparation Facility, and the Supercomputing Research Center. Through these efforts and many others, the four ERDC laboratories in Vicksburg have become world-class facilities, and I am proud to represent them. While I am particularly grateful for his work in Mississippi, I know that he similarly supported improvements to the Army's research and development capabilities in other locations across the Nation. These efforts include a new annex housing researchers who study military beach operations in the Outer Banks of North Carolina, and an expansion of the Permafrost Research Tunnel near Fairbanks, AK, which is improving our understanding of the Arctic terrain. During his tenure at ERDC, Lon Pribble's experience in facilities led him to become a resource to the broader defense research enterprise by chairing a government panel charged with assessing defense laboratory infrastructure issues.

Lon Pribble is an outgoing personality and was instrumental in making connections for industry and academic partners across the State and the Nation to help carry out ERDC's mission. I have appreciated his efforts to ensure that partnerships between ERDC and Mississippi universities continue to grow, advance the science and technology to meet Army needs, and develop a diverse student talent pool experienced in Army priorities.

For these efforts, Lon Pribble has received numerous civilian recognitions in addition to his former military awards, including twice receiving the Commander's Award for Civilian Service in 2016 and in 2020. These honors recognize that Lon Pribble has embodied the Army's ideal of selfless service as both a military officer and a civilian. I join my constituents in thanking Lon Pribble for his commitment to our State and the Nation and wish him a happy retirement.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO JUSTIN HEUPEL

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today I have the honor of recognizing Justin Heupel of Flathead County for his dedication to his students and passion for advancing agriculture education in Montana.

Originally from Culbertson, MT, Mr. Heupel first joined FFA as a student in 1988. His passion for farming and ag took him to Montana State University where he received a degree in agricultural education—"Go Cats!" He has served Montana as an educator for 27 years and has spent the last 19 years teaching at the H.E. Robinson Agricultural Education Center in Kalispell, where he also serves as a faculty adviser for FFA.

Mr. Heupel has been instrumental in improving and expanding ag education



in our great State. He served as president of the Montana Association of Agricultural Educators and advocated for the Advancing Agricultural Education in Montana program that helped create over 25 new agriculture education programs in Montana schools and provided funding to improve the quality of existing programs. Recently, Mr. Heupel received the National FFA Organization's highest degree recognizing him for his exceptional service to agricultural education.

Teachers serve an important role as they shape the minds of young Montanans and help prepare them for future careers. Montana has a rich legacy of agriculture, as it is the primary driver of our economy. There is no doubt that Mr. Heupel's passion for teaching about agriculture helped encourage young Montanans to pursue careers in this important field. In fact, nine of his former students have gone on to become agricultural education teachers themselves.

Passionate educators like Mr. Heupel help make Montana a better place and give students the tools they need to be successful. It is my honor to recognize Mr. Heupel for his devotion to shaping the next generation of Montana agricultural leaders and keeping Montana's rich legacy of agriculture alive. Keep up the great work; you make Montana proud.●

#### REMEMBERING QUINCY RAMON NELSON-SWEATT

● Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life of Quincy Ramon Nelson-Sweatt of Rineyville, KY, who passed away Friday, September 2, 2022, at his home, surrounded by his closest family and covered in love.

Quincy was born 9 years ago today, on February 1, 2014, to Timothy Sweatt and Natalie Nelson in Elizabethtown, KY. He was a student at Rineyville Elementary School, where he was in the third grade. He chose to be extraordinarily positive in the midst of the most challenging time, bravely facing diffuse midline glioma, a terminal cancer of the brain and spinal cord.

He never lost his sweet smile that could put anyone at ease—or the way his copper-brown eyes could light up the whole room. He always took such pride in his appearance. From his haircuts and sun-kissed curls to his outfits, he always loved to look his best. Quincy was truly beautiful both inside and out.

Before the date of diagnosis, November 11, 2021, he was a perfectly healthy, active, fun-loving little boy. Within 10 months, he underwent emergency surgery to try to remove the tumor, which was unsuccessful and left him a quadriplegic; he also had 55 rounds of radiation to his brain and spinal cord, along with trying multiple chemotherapy drugs.

He endured the toughest days with grace and positivity that was unmatched. He exhibited such joy, which

was undeniably shared with anyone in his presence. Whether he was singing and dancing to his favorite songs or snuggling with his mama or his cats, Sprinkles and Peaches, he knew how to savor the time he had.

His love for life is indescribable. His list of loves was long and as big as his heart. He loved cars, trampoline jumping, singing to his jams, dancing, playing with his cousins that were like siblings, farming, running outside, and time with his family and friends. His favorite hobbies were singing and listening to music, baseball, go-cart riding, swimming, and playing outside. He was passionate about it all.

Quincy was an empathetic and intuitive old soul that made everyone around him feel special and loved. If you ever need inspiration, meditate for just a minute on his life and the love he shared and choose to live with love.

Quincy was preceded in death by his paternal grandmother Gwendolyn Sweatt. Quincy is survived by his parents, Timothy Sweatt and Natalie Nelson; paternal grandparent, Timothy Buckler; maternal grandparents, Byron and Mary Nelson; aunt and uncles on his father's side, Frederick Sweatt, Freda Sweatt, and Stephen Buckler; on his mother's side aunt and uncles Erin Riffle (Jason) and Clint Nelson; his cousins on his mother's side Ava, Caleb, Hudson, and Charlotte Riffle; and his cousins on his father's side Dallas, Rashaud, and Nia Sweatt.

Quincy will live in the hearts of his family and will be missed more than words could ever describe. Happy Birthday, Quincy.●

#### VERMONT STATE OF THE UNION ESSAY CONTEST JUDGES

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, since 2010 I have sponsored a State of the Union essay contest for Vermont high school students. This contest gives students in my State the opportunity to articulate what issues they would prioritize if they were President of the United States.

This is the contest's 13th year, and I would like to congratulate the seven volunteer judges who helped choose the contest winners and finalists. The contest relies on its committed team of judges. The judges take time to review each essay and evaluate the diversity in writing that engages students and will benefit them for years to come. The judges' willingness to participate in this project reflects their dedication to both the students and our state, and for that, I graciously thank them.

The judges include:

Andrew Chobanian of Oxbow High School—participant for one year

Lauren Conti of Stowe High School—participant for one year

Jason Gorczyk of Milton High School—participant for ten years

Krista Huling of South Burlington High School—participant for ten years

Mary Schell of White River Valley School—participant for one year

Sarah Soule of Middlebury Union High School—participant for five years

Terri Vest of Twinfield Union School & Vermont Virtual Learning Collaborative—participant for thirteen years

I am very proud to enter the State of the Union Essay Contest judges into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to recognize their contributions.●

#### VERMONT STATE OF THE UNION ESSAY WINNERS

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, since 2010, I have sponsored a State of the Union essay contest for Vermont high school students. This contest gives students in my State the opportunity to articulate what issues they would prioritize if they were President of the United States.

This is the contest's 13th year, and I would like to congratulate the 382 students who participated. It is truly heartening to see so many young people engaged in finding solutions for the problems that face our country. To my mind, this is what democracy is all about.

A volunteer panel of Vermont educators reviewed the essays and chose August Howe as this year's winner. August, a junior at Twinfield Union School, wrote about the impact of misinformation on our society and our democracy. J Lahue, a freshman at Burr and Burton Academy, was the second place winner. J wrote about how to address political polarization. Keenan Wallace, a junior at Twinfield Union School, was the third place winner, with an essay on unions and labor rights.

I am very proud to enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the essays submitted by August, J and Keenan:

WINNER, AUGUST HOWE, TWINFIELD UNION SCHOOL, JUNIOR

This past Sunday, January 8th, 2023, rioters stormed official capitol buildings in Brazil. The incident parallels in many ways the January 6th attack on the U.S. capitol, the two-year anniversary of which had passed just two days prior to the Brazil riot. Both events were caused, in part, by misinformation campaigns waged primarily on social media platforms. Both instances are extreme examples of what can happen when misinformation forces people into action against problems that don't exist. Both instances are proof as to why the rise of misinformation and fake news on social media is one of the major problems facing our country.

The past 25 years have seen the rise of the internet and subsequent social media platforms. Starting out as a place to connect with people on a personal level, these platforms have grown to dominate the online landscape and now serve as many people's primary source of information. They have strayed from their original purpose, developing into money generating machines that rely on user's constant engagement. Tapping into people's psychology is the main way social media platforms and those on it obtain such participation, and unfortunately, negative and emotionally-manipulating content is what gains the most attraction. As a result, social media platforms breed negativity, division, and ultimately, distorted opinions that turn into mis- and disinformation and fake news on just about every subject out there.

The solution to such a problem is complicated and far from perfect, but there are still a few options. Social media platforms are essentially news sources at this point, yet they are not held to the same legal standards. News sources are liable for the content they release, social media platforms, however, are exempt from such liability by Section 230, a law passed by the U.S. Congress that protects all providers and users of interactive computer services from liability for the content on these platforms, regardless of whether it is true or false. Originally created to protect internet user's speech, Section 230 now enables people to exercise their freedom of speech and introduce misand disinformation into the media stream without consequence. By repealing Section 230 and holding social media companies responsible for the content on their platforms, we will hold them to the same standards as established news outlets, and force them to do more to stop the spread of misinformation on their platforms.

Equally as important as holding companies accountable is encouraging the education of the general public on media literacy and critical thinking skills to identify misinformation and fake news. An educated population is essential to a well-governed population, and that education must now include media literacy. Programs should be implemented in schools, starting as young as elementary students, to teach how to identify fake news and be media literate.

Regulating social media platform like standard news outlets, and educating the general population are the best ways we can defend our country's democracy from the threat of misinformation in social media.

SECOND PLACE, J LAHUE, BURR AND BURTON ACADEMY, FRESHMAN

Political polarization, or the divergence of political beliefs away from the center towards ideological extremes, is a prominent problem and a threat to democracy. Americans continue to create more divides between people who have opposing views, and the result, an astounding lack of empathy plagues our country. The 2019 government shutdown and the violent January 6th insurrection were both major consequences that stemmed from political polarization. This rise of extreme ideologies can be attributed to various factors, such as media partisanship, hostility between political opponents, and economic inequality. These factors then lead to congressional gridlock, lack of trust, an increase in violence, and, most importantly, a lessened sense of community. But, there are steps that, if taken, could stop polarization at its roots.

To solve political polarization, I propose a new bill, titled The Unity Act, to address the underlying problems. This bill would create forums to unify people and cultivate common ground by promoting dialogue and understanding and addressing economic inequality. While political polarization is a scary threat to democracy and the Nation we live in, we can bridge the divides with the following measures.

The first way the bill would eliminate polarization is by targeting economic inequality. By increasing the minimum wage to just 10 dollars and 10 cents, around four million people would be taken out of poverty. Similarly, investing in education, especially Pre-K, would improve economic mobility. Furthermore, The Unity Act would expand the Earned Income Tax Credit to bring children above the poverty line. These reforms would solve economic inequality, a major cause of extreme ideologies because inequality leads to social divisions.

With the investment in education, the bill would also encourage middle schools to

teach media literacy and how to differentiate between fake and factual information. Teaching this important skill at a young age would lessen the negative effects of misinformation. The bill would also recommend schools teach tough topics to create more dialogue and thus reduce the risk of extreme partisan views.

While these reforms would address the underlying problems, the major initiative would target polarization through Citizen Assemblies. Citizen Assemblies would be held in the counties of each State monthly. They would bring people together to speak about divisive issues that need to be addressed. Assemblies would select participants in the same way as jury duty so they could engage in political deliberation with their ideas directed towards the State and National Government. These assemblies would effectively establish common ground to reduce extreme partisan views.

In conclusion, political polarization is an increasing problem that undermines democracy through issues like lack of trust and a lost sense of unity. By correcting economic inequalities, bettering the education system, and introducing Citizen Assemblies, polarization can be slowly eliminated. If passed, The Unity Act would create a bridge to improve the welfare of American citizens by cultivating common ground. Especially as newer and more partisan issues emerge, it is imperative that we strive towards a more cohesive Nation by addressing political polarization.

THIRD PLACE, KEENAN WALLACE, TWINFIELD UNION SCHOOL, JUNIOR

One of the most pressing issues facing our society today is the issue of labor rights. Recently there has been a slew of confrontations between workers and corporations, from Starbucks and Amazon to the threatened rail strikes earlier this year, 2022 has been tumultuous. The way that each of these confrontations were negotiated either within the corporation or, in the case of the rail strikes, by the United States Government sends an important message, our workers' rights are not the priority.

In November of this year Starbucks employees organized a walkout at more than 100 Starbucks locations in protest of Starbucks repeated refusal to negotiate contracts with labor unions. Many workers cited being underpaid, understaffed and overworked. But Starbucks has been adamant in their anti-union stance, giving pay increases selectively to locations that had not voted to unionize, firing union organizers, refusing to negotiate contracts with union representatives, and taking steps to prohibit union elections at its stores. Unfortunately, this union busting attitude is not exclusive to Starbucks. At Amazon, one of the world's largest corporations, the same issues repeat themselves. Low pay, oppressive and, at times unsafe working conditions, as well as aggressive anti-union policies are also apparent there.

Earlier this year the 12 largest rail unions threatened to strike in protest of low pay and a lack of paid sick leave. Because of the massive economic impact, a strike like this would have the US government stepped in. In November President Biden brokered a deal between the major rail unions and the rail corporations. This deal promises a 24 percent wage increase over the next five years, but it critically lacks any guaranteed paid sick days. This lack of sick days led four of the 12 major unions to reject the deal. Despite this Biden stepped in and asked Congress to impose the deal onto the Unions, disregarding their decision. This sets a precedent for corporations like Starbucks and Amazon to disregard labor unions.

The framework for the solution is already in place. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is an agency that was created to enforce the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). This agency is responsible for helping organize unions and they step in when corporations violate the NLRA. Unfortunately, the NLRB is tremendously underfunded and since 2014 it has received no budget increases, resulting in an effective budget cut of more than 20 percent due to inflation. Additionally, under the Trump administration the agency's leadership was gutted, further challenging the fight for unionization. Under Biden the NLRB's performance has increased, but it is not enough. By increasing the NLRB's funding, its ability to organize unions, achieve justice for wronged workers and keep corporations in check would increase dramatically.

Increasing funding for the NLRB is a simple, low cost solution to a problem that has plagued the American working class for decades. A stronger NLRB would not only be a boon for workers, but also a valuable tool for the government to check the ever-increasing power that corporations hold over our democracy.●

#### VERMONT STATE OF THE UNION ESSAY CONTEST FINALISTS

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask to have printed in the RECORD some of the finalists' essays written by Vermont High School students as part of the 13th Annual State of the Union Essay contest conducted by my office.

The material follows:

##### FINALISTS

JACOB ANTONOVICH, BELLOWS FREE ACADEMY  
FAIRFAX, SENIOR

My grandfather, Robert Antonovich, got drafted into the Korean War where he served in the Army. At the present moment he lays dying, at home, and without much dignity. My grandfather is in dire need of hospice as he goes through his last stages of life but at 88, he is unable to afford privatized healthcare and my grandma (aged 90) is of little help. Fortunately, as a result of my grandfather's service he is entitled to receive benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). What upsets me is that where a privatized hospice service could be there in 24 hours, after almost two weeks, the VA is still unable to get anyone there to help my grandfather walk through his last life with the dignity he deserves.

Beyond my grandfather, millions of Americans who put their lives on the line to serve this country are stuck without much dignity. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless; between 130,000 and 200,000 veterans are homeless on any given night which represents between one fourth and one fifth of all homeless people. After putting their lives on the line, why are so many veterans being dumped on the streets in such poor conditions? Many of these problems could be fixed by providing proper funding and ensuring that the security of veteran relief organizations is a top priority. For instance, of the \$300 Billion budget for the VA only about one percent was spent on homeless care programs. The VA's budget is even less for community care, which covers hospice services. Based on the 2023 Budget submission for the VA, less than .0004 percent of the budget was allocated to community care. To make matters worse, hospice care is only a portion of that already small percentage leaving very little money to help those in need.

The poor treatment of veterans is a major problem in this Nation. To fix this, I suggest

that more money be allocated to these specific areas of the VA as to ensure that no veterans are left homeless, and that all who served have a chance to live the remainder of their lives in dignity rather than the abject squalor that many are forced to live in today. I am still hoping that the VA will be able to get hospice care to my grandfather before it's too late, but with how a large portion of veterans in this Nation are currently being treated, I'm not so sure. I hope that through the hard work of our Nation's legislators, no veterans will ever be left behind like the thousands of veterans who are homeless today or my grandfather who is yet to receive the care he needs at a price he can afford.

ANDREW BARRETT, OXBOW HIGH SCHOOL,  
SOPHOMORE

Mental Health America (MHA) unveiled in 2019-2020, that "20.78 percent of adults in America were experiencing a mental illness." Mental health awareness is a minuscule topic compared to most political conversations, but it cannot be disregarded. Millions of American citizens face mental illness; most go without treatment due to the expense and shortage of mental health professionals. Mental health is prominent in society, and its awareness needs improvement. What is the solution? Increased funding for mental health care, and early schooling on mental health is crucial for advancement.

Lately, due primarily to the pandemic, there has been a spike in mental illness. Mental illnesses like depression can disrupt people's capacity to function, whether at school, work, home, or social life. As of 2020, 12.1 million adult Americans experienced profound thoughts of suicide. Additionally, MHA states, "half (54.7 percent) of adults with a mental illness do not receive treatment," and "59.8 percent of youth with major depression do not receive any mental health treatment." Mental illness can lead to substance use disorder, proving hazardous to those suffering from mental illness and potentially to others around them. Society needs to be a safe place where individuals are comfortable and capable of seeking support.

The leading solution to the mental health crisis is better funding for mental health care. Funding would come from America's military spending. According to World Population Review, America has the highest military budget and is greater than the following ten countries combined. There is a shortage of mental health specialists, and seeking aid is unaffordable for most. A large portion of adults (42 percent) with a mental illness "reported they were unable to receive necessary care because they could not afford it," according to MHA. Therapy and care are too expensive for most people, proving problematic in overcoming mental illness. Therapy presents a sense of hope. Dr. Lloyd Sederer, a psychiatrist, states, "When there is hope, there is reason to participate in treatment, to learn to manage the disease, and to reach for life when faced with setbacks." Altogether, funding for treatments and mental health care would help reduce the mental health emergency in America.

Along with funding for mental health care, social standards need to change. There cannot be a stigma around mental illness. People should feel comfortable and aware of mental illness. Education on the matter is critical to accomplish this because mental illness is real. If taught the subject at a young age, people are provided awareness, and they will feel comfortable seeking help and helping others.

Mental health is an immensely influential element of every person's life.

ALEXANDER CALIFANO, CRAFTSBURY ACADEMY,  
JUNIOR

In recent months, the Supreme Court has been at the center of American political de-

bate as it prepares to rule on a number of crucial cases. Among these is Students for Fair Admission vs. Harvard in which the Court will decide the future of affirmative action.

In 1964, the Civil Rights Act was signed into law by Lyndon Johnson, legalizing affirmative action in the United States with the goal of preventing discrimination in hiring practices. This protection was later extended into the realm of college admissions. The ability of universities to use affirmative action as a tool to level the playing field for historically disadvantaged groups is now in jeopardy. Those who oppose affirmative action argue that by favoring historically disadvantaged groups, universities discriminate against other groups. That is simply untrue. The goal of these practices is to promote student diversity, which benefits all of us by expanding our intellectual horizons and inviting us to view the world from new perspectives. The diversity that affirmative action policies foster is responsible for spreading knowledge of and empathy for people from all walks of life and all races and cultures. If the Supreme Court outlaws affirmative action, it won't just be historically disadvantaged groups that will be hurt. We would all suffer by losing an invaluable part of the educational system.

To prevent the Supreme Court from restricting the range of educational opportunities available to racial groups already struggling to make their way in this country, Congress should make good on its endless promises to help Americans by taking concrete action. This year, the Respect for Marriage Act codified the right of individuals to enter into interracial and same-sex marriages, protecting them from the caprices of the Supreme Court. Congress should similarly codify affirmative action policies. Such codification would ensure that affirmative action can fulfill its intended purpose of advancing historically disadvantaged groups while, at the same time, giving America's future leaders a chance to interact regularly with students who represent the diversity of knowledge, beliefs, opinions, and ethnicities that make American universities the best in the world and which have made this country strong. Furthermore, by allowing policies that help historically disadvantaged groups succeed, we will be living up to this Nation's founding ideal—the notion that all men are created equal. We can help make that dream a reality by reversing the effects of race-based prejudice, discrimination, and violence.

If the Supreme Court decides to end affirmative action, Congress must move to protect the rights of educational institutions to craft admissions policies that would ensure that applicants aren't punished for their race, ethnicity or lack of resources and that future generations of students aren't deprived of the diversity of thoughts, opinions, and ancestries that have made America such a powerful force for good.

LEAH KUHNERT, WOODSTOCK UNION HIGH  
SCHOOL, JUNIOR

Climate change is perhaps the most unavoidable issue facing our world today, yet is often pushed off by lawmakers worldwide in favor of other issues. Although fixing climate change is a complex task, addressing environmental impacts by sector is an important step towards taking much-needed action before the effects of climate change are irreversible. According to the EPA, agriculture accounted for 11 percent of US greenhouse gas emissions in 2020. This is why, as a country, we must take action to decrease industrial agriculture and turn towards regenerative farming techniques.

Governmental subsidies are what currently drives the dysfunctional system of industrial

agriculture. The Agriculture Act of 2018 section 1202 outlines the crops eligible for governmental subsidies, which include "... wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, upland cotton, long grain rice, medium grain rice, soybeans, designated oilseeds ..." etc. These subsidies have effectively supported the growth of specialized farms that mass produce only one of these crops. The problem with this is that over-tilling and a lack of crop diversity in these industrial farms destroy the health of the soil. This renders ineffective the natural process of carbon sequestration that relies on healthy soil, contributing considerably to climate change.

An essential step that can be taken is to re-evaluate how subsidies are used and how they impact the environment. These subsidies have created a system that primarily benefits commercial agribusinesses in the long run. Meanwhile, it disadvantages small farmers who raise a diverse range of crops and livestock. When prices for industrially produced foods are driven down by subsidies, small farmers are forced to lower their prices in response, causing losses in revenue. It isn't necessary to get rid of agricultural subsidies altogether, but it's critical to change how they're used. Instead of offering permanent funds to artificially prop up monoculture, subsidies should be used as a specific and short-term tool to support farmers in switching to more regenerative and diverse crop production.

A study by the University of Vermont found that regenerative farming methods, such as rotational grazing, crop rotation, and cover cropping result in the sequestration of atmospheric carbon, unlike specialized farming methods. Regenerative farming techniques contribute to a more sustainable agricultural system while also helping mitigate the effects of climate change.

Switching to regenerative farming practices also makes economic sense. By growing a more diverse selection of crops, farmers are less vulnerable to revenue loss in cases of a failing crop. Additionally, regenerative methods allow farmers to do more with less land, which means spending less money on farmland. Effective land use increases the health of the soil and extends the lifetime of the farmland, and the rotation of crops and livestock ensures a more sustainably symbiotic system. Regenerative agriculture will contribute to the stability of farmers in America, while also reforming the food economy. Most importantly, this change will help to mitigate the imminent destructive effects of climate change that we're facing now more prevalently than ever. It's time to end our subsidy system that rewards irresponsible and unsustainable farming.

ELLA MATTEI, NORTHFIELD MIDDLE & HIGH  
SCHOOL, FRESHMAN

It is a basic human right to have access to healthy, affordable food to create the best future possible for future generations. Food accessibility is getting worse and worse each year, even in a farming State such as Vermont; food is getting more expensive to transport creating a higher price. This inevitably causes problems for people with a low income to have access to healthy food. Food deserts are an increasing problem in poor neighborhoods and towns, and they don't have enough money to fix them. Food deserts are generally associated with low-population areas, abandoned or vacated homes, high unemployment- rated areas, or less-educated people.

Food deserts are more common in Black neighborhoods according to a 2014 study from Johns Hopkins University. They found that black and urban areas have a severe lack of supermarkets while white areas had the most and mixed-race areas were a mixed bag.

The idea of people not getting their basic needs met because of a characteristic of them such as their skin color is mind-blowing. America claims to be a great country but won't feed people because of the color of their skin. More than 39 million people in America suffer from hunger each year and about 9 million of them are children. In America, we are supposed to protect our citizens and the fragile minds of our youth. Instead, there are children starving and we have not made much progress to solve this nationwide problem. Here in Vermont, 1 out of 4 people know somebody facing food insecurity, and 2 out of 5 Vermonters are facing food insecurity personally.

To fix food insecurity, we must invest our Nation's resources to support healthy food access to all populations. 60 years after LBJ's War on Poverty, it is embarrassing that the richest Nation on Earth, which feeds other countries, could possibly have people starving. If the government were serious, it must invest in local community-based solutions. Urban farms in places like Detroit should be a model for the rest of our country's food deserts. Creating food-sharing programs, and making more Federal food assistance programs should also be a priority for this new Congress. They should also create more food pantries where people can donate food.

Many people would argue that it would be too expensive to fix this national crisis because it would cost around \$37 billion a year until 2030, but America is the wealthiest country in the world and if we can afford to have the most nuclear weapons when each weapon costs \$8.4 million, we are capable of feeding our citizens. Everybody deserves a chance at being fed.

LEILA MCMILLIAN, SOUTH BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL, FRESHMAN

Equality, respect, and understanding are things that everyone deserves even, if not especially, those who are psychologically or physically different. People with disabilities or neurodivergence are often ridiculed or avoided because they process and navigate the world around us differently. It is my opinion that if other people actually understood more about what it is like to be different than a "normal person", then they might sympathize more and bullying or other mistreatments might become less of a problem.

According to an NPR article: "A new study suggests that nearly a third of children and adolescents with disabilities has experienced violence—defined as physical, emotional or sexual abuse as well as neglect. It's everything from being struck or verbally attacked by a family member to cyberbullying. And they're reportedly twice as likely to experience violence as young people without disabilities." Because of the greater likelihood of being bullied for being different, people might be less inclined to say anything if they need help for fear of being ridiculed. A person might hide their actions or needs to fit in with "normal" people, but if they really need help and are too afraid to ask for it, then serious problems like fights or school shootouts could break out more often.

People with neurodivergence or disabilities are often seen as abnormal and people make such a big deal out of their differences that it pretty well separates them from the rest of society. According to NPR: "A tremendous number of kids are affected. An estimated 291 million children and adolescents—slightly more than 1 in 10—have disabilities such as hearing or vision loss, epilepsy or intellectual disabilities." Our kids should not have to be the subject of other's disgraceful humor, or be the butt of their jokes. They should be able to grow up in a world that ac-

cepts people for who they are, not what they are or what other people think they are. They should have equal chances to work in good jobs as any other person, because they are people too and should be treated as such. Some people might not see the problem as it is though, people all over the world have been accused of witchcraft because of their differences, or have been called cursed. "It is not an easy issue." Says Fran Kritz, a health policy reporter based in Washington, D.C. "We're talking about something that has multiple causes and can't be treated with a vaccine or intervention. We have to create new social norms and educational, social service, health and other systems that prevent and respond effectively to violence against children with disabilities. We need to ensure that systems are sufficiently supported financially and that personnel have ongoing training." We are people too and we all deserve equality and respect as anyone does.

ALAINA ROGERS, BELLOWS FREE ACADEMY FAIRFAX, JUNIOR

The gun violence epidemic is an extremely serious issue facing America today, and it continues to get worse. According to the CDC and Pew Research Center, 45,222 people lost their lives to gun violence in 2020, which is the most recent year for which complete data can be found. As I have grown up, I have seen the number of gun violence stories hitting the news increase year after year. I have watched my school crack down on safety and lockdown procedures. I have been repeatedly made aware of the threats local schools have had to deal with in recent years, and I have seen the strain that gun violence has put on our country while nothing is done about it. Gun violence has been a prominent issue in America for many years, and it is only getting worse. It is time for us to take action.

There are steps our Federal Government can take to prevent gun violence. Common sense gun laws that limit access to these deadly weapons are crucial to ending this crisis. Universal background checks must be strengthened, and the loopholes that allow private sales, transfers of guns from one person to another, and sales of firearms at large gun shows to bypass background checks must be closed. According to FBI records, more than 300,000 illegal firearm sales were blocked by background checks in 2020. Background checks are effective when they are conducted and have earned bipartisan support from the vast majority of Americans. Eighty-eight percent of Americans support universal background checks. However, these background checks can only truly protect us if they are required at the Federal level for all firearm purchases and transfers.

In addition to strengthening universal background checks, assault rifles and high-capacity magazines must be banned at the Federal level. These weapons are designed with the purpose of killing other human beings and have no place in American society. Assault rifles and high-capacity magazines have the capacity to kill many people quickly, making them highly dangerous. There was a Federal ban on the sale and import of assault weapons from 1994 to 2004, and studies show that mass shooting fatalities were 70 percent less likely during that time. A ban like this must be reinstated and the prospect has received bipartisan support.

Gun violence is a very complex issue. Many things need to happen to truly ensure domestic tranquility. However, the first and most crucial step is to enact common sense gun laws, and we must take action quickly. 2022 was a challenging year for both our country and the State of Vermont in terms of gun violence, with both the Buffalo and Uvalde mass shootings and skyrocketing crime rates

in the Burlington area. As we wait to solve this problem, tens of thousands of people lose their lives every year. It is imperative that we take action, to protect our current generation and ensure that future generations grow up feeling safe and secure in their communities and their country.

HANNAH SMILEY, MILTON HIGH SCHOOL, SOPHOMORE

365 days. 648 mass shootings. 44,208 people dead due to gun violence this year alone. No family has been left untouched by the immense harm caused by gun violence. Everywhere we go, we live in constant fear of being attacked or losing someone we love. It has changed the way we as Americans live our lives. This isn't the so-called "American dream" so many speak of. In fact, gun violence has stripped the most important part of our Constitution from us; our right to live.

Our country has become, dare I say, accustoming, to gun violence. Some may even call it our "new normal". We're almost numb to the constant news of shootings all over the country. It seems as though we can't escape it, now more than ever. Pew Research Center states that since 2010, the number of total gun violence deaths has increased by 43 percent. These deaths include suicide, mass shootings, and homicide. When looking at these statistics, we often fail to realize that these "statistics" are actually real people. Real families. Real lives.

In order to see the full picture of gun violence, it's important to hear stories from survivors themselves. In a 2021 interview, Ashley, a Sandy Hook shooting survivor who was only seven at the time of the widely known school shooting, claims to have PTSD from this event. She said, "It was just a whole lot of anxiety that I had never felt as a 7-year-old. I had hardly even felt sadness . . . It kind of made us realize that the world's not all sunshine and rainbows, I guess." Ashley's story is heartbreakingly terrifying, yet it's not unique. Her story sounds like countless others who've described similar feelings of anxiety and trauma. Survivors feel as though they can't escape the terrors. How can we, as human beings, continue to let innocent people lose their lives to gun violence?

There are several solutions to the issue of gun violence in the US, the main one being stricter gun laws. For example, Japan, a country with one of the lowest gun violence rates in the world, has issued strict gun control laws. The process of purchasing a gun in Japan is both time-consuming and expensive. Those interested in purchasing a gun must undergo a multi-step process consisting of a gun safety class, recurring written exams, mental and physical health checks, an extensive background check, and gun storage inspections. According to The New York Times, in 2020, around 192,000 licensed firearms were purchased in Japan, which is fewer than the number of registered guns in Alabama. For context, Japan's population is roughly 20 times Alabama's population. America's obsession with guns has triggered an epidemic of hate and violence.

We must act on the issue of gun violence by issuing and enforcing stronger gun control laws to make our country a safer place for everyone. This solution is vital to American life as we know it.

JOSHUA STEARNS, HANOVER HIGH SCHOOL, JUNIOR

The most basic tenet of our democracy is that politicians are chosen by the people. First observed in 1812, gerrymandering has allowed politicians to define their districts to choose their voters, overriding the will of the people. Districts are as old as our Nation and play an instrumental role in who victors

up and down the ballot, thereby defining our communities. With the Nation more polarized than ever, gerrymandering has become increasingly ambitious in the past decade.

In the Constitution, the framers stipulated that “the Number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty Thousand,” but today the average congressional district has 747,184 constituents. The Permanent Apportionment Act of 1929 capped the number of representatives at 435. Since then, the population of our country has nearly tripled, causing an explosion in the number of Americans per congressional district. Beginning in 1967 with the Uniform Congressional District Act, every State was mandated to conduct elections for the House of Representatives using single-member-districts (SMDs). This requirement normalized gerrymandering as politicians throughout the country manipulated boundaries to select their voters and maximize their chances of victory in subsequent elections.

SMDs empower politicians of both parties, Democrats and Republicans, to gerrymander. Gerrymandering can be clearly observed after the 2020 redistricting in Democratic-controlled States like Illinois and Republican-controlled States like Wisconsin. Gerrymandering directly influences many of the important issues we face today, from abortion to gun control to climate change. While both parties gerrymander, it has tended to skew elections towards Republicans nationally, particularly because district manipulation in Southern States results in the disenfranchisement of people of color, one of Democrats’ most important voting blocs. In Georgia, where Senator Raphael Warnock won a majority of the vote in 2022, Democrats won only 35 percent of the State’s U.S. House seats. In contrast to SMDs, multi-member-districts (MMDs) combined with proportional representation award each party a certain number of seats based on the percentage of the votes garnered. Using MMDs, Georgia Democrats would have been awarded about half of the U.S. House seats. Such is the case in many States. This representation discrepancy caused by gerrymandering could have wildly changed the outcome of the 2022 elections.

This method by which we select those who represent us in the peoples’ house, intended by the founders to be representative, currently is undemocratic. Just because gerrymandering has been part of our political fabric for centuries does not mean that it should endure. Should we not choose to further democratize our Nation?

Solving this systemic issue will not be easy—most institutionalized processes are difficult to reverse. But it is possible. To do so, we must begin with repealing these two Congressional Acts which have undermined our democracy, and we must transition to proportionally representative MMDs. To fully realize the possibility that is our democracy, we must also increase the number of representatives of the peoples’ house, to ensure the fair, equal, and meaningful representation of every citizen of this great country. Because every American deserves equal representation.

LYLA TRIGAUX, BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL,  
FRESHMAN

Despite living in Vermont, one of the most progressive states when it comes to LGBTQ rights, I still see discrimination in my day to day life. In my neighborhood alone, there are hateful stickers plastered all over signs, claiming someone “can’t be born in the wrong body.” As a freshman in high school, I fear for my transgender classmates who are targeted by these stickers, and I also fear for those who have to experience discrimination like this in school, as well. School is sup-

posed to be a foundation for building a healthy and happy life, but for the nearly two million youth in America who identify as LGBTQ, school too often becomes the opposite. Congress must pass bills like the Safe Schools Improvement Act to make our school system and our country a more inclusive place.

Bullying at school can not only prevent youth from learning, but it can also pose a threat to their wellbeing. LGBTQ youth are at an increased risk of being bullied. According to the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 32 percent of lesbian, gay or bisexual students said they have been bullied on school property, compared to 17.1 percent of straight students. This negative environment can lead to serious outcomes for these students, from failing to graduate to taking their own lives. According to the Trevor Project, the suicide rate of LGBTQ youth is more than four times higher than the suicide rate of straight, cisgendered youth, and feeling unsafe at school is a contributing cause. With lives on the line, we must take steps to make our schools safer for everyone.

The Safe Schools Improvement Act was a bill introduced to the House in 2021 aimed at stopping bullying and harassment in schools. The bill requires schools to enact policies to not only prohibit, but also prevent bullying and harassment based on protected categories like gender identity and sexual orientation. Preventing these incidents from happening in the first place is what makes this bill a good solution. While supporting LGBTQ youth after bullying or harassment has already occurred is important, it’s not enough. Schools being able to stop it from happening in the first place is what can save someone from trauma. Making this bill a law may also be a quicker process than writing a whole new one. According to the Trevor Project, of the LGBTQ youth that seriously consider suicide each year, at least one attempts it every 45 seconds. The faster we pass this bill the more lives it may be able to save.

All students deserve equal access to education and the chance to learn without the distraction of threat to their safety and mental wellbeing. For too long, LGBTQ youth have had to endure a hostile school environment. Supporting the Safe Schools Improvement Act is an important step towards ending bullying, protecting students’ rights, and saving lives.

SAMANTHA URBINA, BELLOWS FREE ACADEMY—  
FAIRFAX, JUNIOR

As of the 2020 census almost 19 percent of the United States population are Latino or Hispanic. Latinos are the second largest ethnic group, the largest minority group and our history is being glossed over in our high school education, being forgotten in a country founded by immigrants. Correcting this injustice starts in the classroom. For example, there is not any mention of our contributions during the world wars. I know there was though, my great uncle, a Mexican-American, was part of the 101st Airborne division during World War II. From what I can remember of all the history that I have learned from elementary school to now, there has been little to no mention of the colonization of Latin and Central Americans or any Latino history or contributions to the United States. The Chicano movement was active during the 1960s and Hispanic-Americans were also fighting for equality during this time, but almost all of the attention in class and textbooks was focused on Civil Rights for Black Americans, Women, and Native Americans. Talking to my friends from other high schools such as Essex, Champlain Valley Union, Colchester and Burlington said they had little to no education on

Latino history. Either it was barely mentioned in a world history class, only talked about cultures in Spanish class or a short unit about North American Indigenous peoples.

The lack of education is part of the reason for the stereotypes and misinformation about Latinos and who we are. Latino history in America is American history and it should be added to the curriculum, and the excuse that areas that don’t have a large population of Latinos-like Vermont-don’t need to learn that part of history is wrong and demeaning. It causes us to feel invisible in our own home and school. Learning and being educated is connected to how everyone thinks as an adult. The lack of Latino history taught can lead to prejudice and biases against this group of people. Drowning out those loud voices that talk with hatred gets us one step closer to complete equality and equity between everyone, it won’t be perfect but the hope is that it will be better.

Progress starts here. Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month is not enough, we can do better than that. School Boards should change the curriculum to include everyone’s history, even if there aren’t students that are Latino, by not teaching inclusive history it is like we don’t exist. In a world history class; tell the story of the colonization of Latin and Central American countries. In American History; let the students know that Latinos had a part in our wars, in the Civil Rights movement, that our voices were loud enough to be heard. Change starts with a clear view of United States education standards shifting to be as inclusive as they claim, changing for all the Latino kids who feel invisible to be proud of who they are and where they come from.

GRETCHEN WERTLIEB, SOUTH BURLINGTON HIGH  
SCHOOL, FRESHMAN

When you think of global warming, you probably think of factories, vehicles, and anything else that emits gas, or, more scientifically, greenhouse gasses. But there is one huge factor that not many people think of. Something we contribute to every day. Food waste.

Feeding America is the largest food rescue organization in the country. They send all that food to people in need of meals or food banks. According to Feeding America, about 108 billion pounds of food is wasted every year. That’s equivalent to 130 billion meals that could go to people in need. All in all, around 40 percent of all food is wasted in the US, which comes out to about \$408 billion a year.

Even if you can get fresh food easily from your local grocery store, your family farm, or somewhere else, food waste impacts you more than you think. Food waste sitting in landfills produces tons of methane, a greenhouse gas even more dangerous than carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). “In the United States, food waste is responsible for more than twice as many greenhouse gasses than commercial aviation, leading some experts to believe that reducing food waste is one of our best shots at combating climate change” (New York Times). Greenhouse gasses trap heat in by drifting up into the air and mixing with other gas molecules. In an article from MIT through the Climate Portal, Jesse Kroll, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Chemical Engineering, is quoted as saying “Greenhouse gas molecules will absorb light . . . This traps the energy, which would otherwise go back into space, so it has the effect of heating up the atmosphere”. This, combined with so many other factors of global warming, is enough to heat our planet to the point of destruction.

Although it’s a big problem, food waste still has some people skeptical about solutions. Some people don’t have a place to

compost food, or don't know what to do with it. It's also hard to know what to do with the already giant piles of food in landfills. One thing we can do to decrease food waste is talk to people about it. Getting your neighborhood or town involved with simple practices like composting or a community garden can make a difference. You can also be more mindful when buying produce at the store. The majority of foods in landfills are foods that don't look as pretty as what you would see in a store. Just because that tomato is misshapen or the lettuce has a brown spot doesn't mean they aren't edible.

Another good way to decrease food waste is donating to organizations that rescue food, like Feeding America. You can also donate directly to your local food bank, which provides meals for families in need. This is a great option, because food waste also contributes to food insecurity. Whatever you may choose to do, we can all be more mindful when thinking about our food consumption and the consequences.●

### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:49 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 382. An act to terminate the public health emergency declared with respect to COVID-19.

H.R. 497. An act to eliminate the COVID-19 vaccine mandate on health care providers furnishing items and services under certain Federal health care programs.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 11. Concurrent resolution providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

### MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 382. An act to terminate the public health emergency declared with respect to COVID-19; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 497. An act to eliminate the COVID-19 vaccine mandate on health care providers furnishing items and services under certain Federal health care programs; to the Committee on Finance.

### MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 184. A bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that major rules of the executive branch shall have no force or effect unless a joint resolution of approval is enacted into law.

### MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bills were read the first time:

S. 214. A bill to allow reciprocity for the carrying of certain concealed firearms.

S. 219. A bill to provide that Members of Congress may not receive pay after October

1 of any fiscal year in which Congress has not approved a concurrent resolution on the budget and passed the regular appropriations bills.

### EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-242. A communication from the Senior Attorney for Regulatory Affairs, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Hazardous Materials: Editorial Corrections and Clarifications" (RIN2137-AF56) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 19, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-243. A communication from the Chair, National Transportation Safety Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Commission's competitive sourcing efforts during fiscal year 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-244. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Spiny Dogfish Fishery; 2019-2021 Spiny Dogfish Specifications" (RIN0648-XG800) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-245. A communication from the Branch Chief of the Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 630 in the Gulf of Alaska" (RIN0648-XA774) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-246. A communication from the Acting Branch Chief of the Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Mid-Atlantic and 2023 and Projected 2024 Specifications" (RIN0648-XC411) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-247. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Affairs, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Adjustments to 2019 Northern Albacore Tuna Quota, 2019 North and South Atlantic Swordfish Quotas, and 2019 Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Reserve Category Quota" (RIN0648-XT006) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-248. A communication from the Secretary of the Maritime Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Tanker Security Program" (RIN2133-AB95)

received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-249. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medical Certification Standards for Commercial Balloon Operations" ((RIN2120-AL51) (Docket No. FAA-2021-1040)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-250. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Increase the Duration of Aircraft Registration" ((RIN2120-AL45) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1514)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-251. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments; Amendment No. 4031" ((RIN2120-AA65) (Docket No. 31454)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-252. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Yaw Maneuver Conditions - Rudder Reversals" ((RIN2120-AK89) (FAA-2018-0653)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-253. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments; Amendment No. 4033" ((RIN2120-AA65) (Docket No. 31456)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-254. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments; Amendment No. 4034" ((RIN2120-AA65) (Docket No. 31457)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-255. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments; Amendment No. 4032" ((RIN2120-AA65) (Docket No. 31455)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.



EC-256. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment to VOR Federal Airway V-426 and Jet Route J-125, and Establishment of United States Area Navigation Route T-399 in the Vicinity of Clear, AK" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2021-0245)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-257. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of United States Area Navigation (RNAV) T-Route T-378; Fort Yukon, AK" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0232)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-258. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of VOR Federal Airways V-26, and V-63; Establishment of Area Navigation (RNAV) Route T-464; and Revocation of the Wausau, WI, Low Altitude Reporting Point; in the Vicinity of Wausau, WI" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0243)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-259. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of R-2206 and Establishment of Restricted Areas R-2206B, R-2206C, R-2206D, R-2206E, R-2206F, and R-2206G; Clear, AK" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2020-0755)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-260. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of United States Area Navigation (RNAV) Route T-269; Yakutat, AK" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2021-1152)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-261. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of United States Area Navigation (RNAV) Route T-380; Emmonak, AK" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0245)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-262. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Eagle Lake, TX" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0924)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-263. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal

Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Multiple Indiana Towns" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0871)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-264. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revocation of Class E Airspace; Startford, TX" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0970)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-265. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Bloomfield, IA" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0773)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-266. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Duluth, MN" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0904)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-267. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class C Airspace; Evansville, IN" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1209)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-268. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Colorado Plains Regional Airport, CO" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0711)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-269. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class D Airspace and Class E Airspace; Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport, MT" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0764)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-270. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Liberal, KS" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1004)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-271. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal

Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Independence and Pittsburg, KS" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1007)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-272. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Menominee, MI" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1003)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-273. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Hoffman GmbH and Co. KG Propellers; Amendment 39-22212" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0980)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-274. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Viking Air Limited (Type Certificate Previously Held by Bombardier, Inc. and de Havilland) Airplanes; Amendment 39-22235" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1490)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-275. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes; Amendment 39-22199" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0159)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-276. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Leonardo S.p.a. Helicopters; Amendment 39-22218" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1307)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-277. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Bell Textron Inc., Erickson 214 Holdings, LLC, Leonardo S.p.a., and Various Restricted Category Helicopters; Amendment 39-22227" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1402)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-278. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; De Havilland Aircraft of Canada Limited (Type Certificate Previously Held by Bombardier, Inc.) Airplanes; Amendment 39-22228" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No.



EC-300. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39-22225" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1066)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-301. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39-22224” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1064)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-302. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39-22226” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1060)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-303. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Bell Textron Canada Limited (Type Certificate Previously Held by Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Limited) Helicopters; Amendment 39-22229” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0992)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-304. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39-22219” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0503)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-305. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes; Amendment 39-22239” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1059)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-306. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters; Amendment 39-22232” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0808)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-307. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes; Amendment 39-22237” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0156)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-308. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes; Amendment 39-22238” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0103)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate

on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-309. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; BAE Systems (Operations) Limited Airplanes; Amendment 39-22234” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1053)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-310. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; MHI RJ Aviation ULC (Type Certificate Previously Held by Bombardier, Inc.) Airplanes; Amendment 39-22209” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0885)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-311. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Television Broadcasting Services; Butte, Montana” (MB Docket No. 22-115) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-312. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Television Broadcasting Services; Great Falls, Montana” (MB Docket No. 22-117) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-313. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Television Broadcasting Services; Helena, Montana” (MB Docket No. 22-118) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-314. A communication from the Program Analyst, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Empowering Broadband Consumers Through Transparency, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking” ((FCC 22-86) (CG Docket No. 22-2)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-315. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Establishing the Digital Opportunity Data Collection, Modernizing the FCC form 477 Data Program” (WC Docket Nos. 19-195 and 11-10) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-316. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Television Broadcasting Services; Missoula, Montana” (MB Docket No. 22-116) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-317. A communication from the Honors Attorney, Wireless Telecommunications Bu-

reau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “3.45 GHz Clearinghouse Selection Committee Order” (WT Docket No. 19-348) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 21, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-318. A communication from the Acting Chief of Engineering and Technology, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Protecting Against National Security Threats to the Communications Supply Chain through the Equipment Authorization Program; Protecting Against National Security Threats to the Communications Supply Chain through the Competitive Bidding Program” ((FCC 22-84) (ET Docket No. 21-232) (EA Docket No. 21-233)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 10, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-319. A communication from the Bureau Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Wireline Competition Bureau released a Fourth Report and Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking entitled Affordable Connectivity Program” ((RIN3060-AL16) (FCC 22-87) (WC Docket No. 21-450)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 10, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-320. A communication from the Division Chief for Regulatory Development, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Incorporation by Reference; North American Standard Out-of-Service Criteria; Hazardous Materials Safety Permits” (RIN2126-AC48) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 10, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-321. A communication from the Deputy Chief Financial Officer and Director for Financial Management, Office of the Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Civil Monetary Penalty Adjustments for Inflation” (RIN0605-AA65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 10, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-322. A communication from the Program Analyst, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Amendment of Part 90 of the Commission’s Rules, Seventh Report and Order and Ninth Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking” ((FCC 22-3) (WP Docket No. 07-100)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 19, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-323. A communication from the Chief of Revenue and Receivables, Office of Managing Director, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Amendment of the FY 2023 Schedule of Application Fees Set Forth in Sections 1.1102 Through 1.1109 of the Commission’s Rules” ((FCC 22-94) (MD Docket No. 20-270)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 19, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-324. A communication from the Secretary of the Federal Trade Commission,

transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Procedures for Submission of Rules Under the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act" received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 19, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-325. A communication from the Secretary of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Energy Labeling Rule" received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 19, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-326. A communication from the Secretary of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Policy Statement of the Federal Trade Commission on Education Technology and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act" received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 19, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-327. A communication from the Secretary of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Statement of the Commission on Use of Prior Approval Provisions in Merger Orders" received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 19, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-328. A communication from the Secretary of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Policy Statement on Enforcement Related to Gig Work" received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 19, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-329. A communication from the Secretary of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Procedures for Responding to Petitions for Rulemaking" received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 19, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-330. A communication from the Chairman of the Office of Proceedings, Surface Transportation Board, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Final Offer Rate Review" ((RIN2140-AB46) (Docket No. EP 755) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 26, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-331. A communication from the Senior Attorney, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Hazardous Materials: Enhanced Safety Provisions for Lithium Batteries Transported by Aircraft (FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018)" (RIN2137-AF20) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 26, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-332. A communication from the Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Civil Monetary Penalty Annual Inflation Adjustment" (RIN3147-AA24) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 26, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-333. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 24-789, "Revised Criminal Code

Act of 2022"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-334. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to D.C. Act 24-789, "Revised Criminal Code Act of 2022"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Ms. SMITH):

S. 198. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to modernize provisions relating to rural health clinics under Medicare; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 199. A bill to codify the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to conduct certain landscape-scale forest restoration projects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. GRAHAM, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 200. A bill to require elementary and middle schools that receive Federal funds to obtain parental consent before changing a minor child's gender markers, pronouns, or preferred name on any school form or allowing a child to change the child's sex-based accommodations, including locker rooms or bathrooms; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. BRAUN, and Mr. BUDD):

S. 201. A bill to require agencies submit zero-based budgets; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. RISCH, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 202. A bill to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to reauthorize the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 203. A bill to amend section 923 of title 18, United States Code, to require an electronic, searchable database of the importation, production, shipment, receipt, sale, or other disposition of firearms; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. COTTON, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. RISCH, Mr. MARSHALL, and Mr. MORAN):

S. 204. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DURBIN:

S. 205. A bill to promote minimum State requirements for the prevention and treatment of concussions caused by participation in school sports, and for other purposes; to

the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Mr. BRAUN, Ms. HASSAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 206. A bill to require the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to regularly review and update policies and manuals related to inspections at ports of entry; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LANKFORD:

S. 207. A bill to modify the procedures for designating foreign states under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and granting temporary protected status to nationals of such foreign states; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LANKFORD (for himself, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. KELLY, Mr. THUNE, Mr. MANCHIN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. TESTER, Ms. HASSAN, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 208. A bill to establish a procedure for terminating a determination by Surgeon General to suspend certain entries and imports from designated places; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BROWN, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 209. A bill to prohibit air carriers from imposing fees that are not reasonable and proportional to the costs incurred by the air carriers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. SMITH (for herself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. DURBIN, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 210. A bill to expand employees eligible for leave and employers subject to leave requirements; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. HAWLEY, and Ms. SINEMA):

S. 211. A bill to authorize the Administrator of General Services to establish an enhanced use lease pilot program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. COONS):

S. 212. A bill to provide a process for ensuring the United States does not default on its obligations; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HAWLEY:

S. 213. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to issue obligations to make Medicare and Social Security payments, despite the debt limit being reached; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. COTTON, Mr. TILLIS, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. MORAN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. HOEVEN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. THUNE, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. BUDD, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. VANCE, Mr. WICKER, Mr. RISCH, Mr. JOHNSON, Mrs. BRITT, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. ERNST, Mr. DAINES, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEE, Mr. ROUNDS, and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 214. A bill to allow reciprocity for the carrying of certain concealed firearms; read the first time.

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 215. A bill to establish a National Council on African American History and Culture within the National Endowment for the Humanities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MORAN:

S. 216. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify the family caregiver program of the Department of Veterans Affairs to include services related to mental health and neurological disorders, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself and Mr. WARNOCK):

S. 217. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a special rule for certain casualty losses of uncut timber; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. KING, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. COTTON, Ms. HASSAN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. ERNST, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. LEE, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. WICKER, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, and Ms. LUMMIS):

S. 218. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of Energy from sending petroleum products from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to China, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BRAUN (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Ms. HASSAN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. BRITT, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 219. A bill to provide that Members of Congress may not receive pay after October 1 of any fiscal year in which Congress has not approved a concurrent resolution on the budget and passed the regular appropriations bills; read the first time.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. CRAMER):

S. 220. A bill to prohibit certain noncompete agreements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. COTTON:

S. 221. A bill to restrict the appointment of certain military personnel to diversity, equity, and inclusion positions; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 222. A bill to require the designation of certain airports as ports of entry; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. COONS):

S. 223. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to fix a technical error in the definitions; considered and passed.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 224. A bill to impose sanctions with respect to associates of the International Criminal Court engaged in investigations of personnel of the United States and its allies; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. VANCE, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. LEE, and Mr. BUDD):

S.J. Res. 6. A joint resolution disapproving the action of the District of Columbia Council in approving the Local Resident Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

## SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BROWN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. PADILLA):

S. Res. 21. A resolution supporting the observation of National Trafficking and Modern Slavery Prevention Month during the period beginning on January 1, 2023, and ending on February 1, 2023, to raise awareness of, and opposition to, human trafficking and modern slavery; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. Res. 22. A resolution congratulating the South Dakota State University Jackrabbits on winning the 2023 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Football Championship Subdivision title; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. Res. 23. A resolution demanding that the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Communist Party of China immediately release Mark Swidan; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. BALDWIN, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. Res. 24. A resolution supporting the observation of "National Girls & Women in Sports Day" on February 1, 2023, to raise awareness of and celebrate the achievements of girls and women in sports; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. COTTON, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. RISCH, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. CRUZ, and Mr. LEE):

S. Con. Res. 3. A concurrent resolution affirming the importance of religious freedom as a fundamental human right that is essential to a free society and protected for all people of the United States under the Constitution of the United States, and recognizing the 237th anniversary of the enactment of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

## ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 9

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) and the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 9, a bill to prohibit the Secretary of Energy from sending petroleum products from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to China, and for other purposes.

S. 40

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 40, a bill to address the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhu-

manity of slavery in the United States and the 13 American colonies between 1619 and 1865 and to establish a commission to study and consider a national apology and proposal for reparations for the institution of slavery, its subsequent de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against African Americans, and the impact of these forces on living African Americans, to make recommendations to the Congress on appropriate remedies, and for other purposes.

S. 68

At the request of Mr. TUBERVILLE, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) and the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) were added as cosponsors of S. 68, a bill to amend the Defense Production Act of 1950 to prevent harm and disruption to the United States agriculture industry by protecting against foreign influence over agriculture production and supply chains, and for other purposes.

S. 133

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 133, a bill to extend the National Alzheimer's Project.

S. 134

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 134, a bill to require an annual budget estimate for the initiatives of the National Institutes of Health pursuant to reports and recommendations made under the National Alzheimer's Project Act.

S. 137

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. 137, a bill to award posthumously a Congressional Gold Medal to Fred Korematsu, in recognition of his contributions to civil rights, his loyalty and patriotism to the United States, and his dedication to justice and equality.

S. 142

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) and the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) were added as cosponsors of S. 142, a bill to prohibit brand name drug companies from compensating generic drug companies to delay the entry of a generic drug into the market, and to prohibit biological product manufacturers from compensating biosimilar and interchangeable companies to delay the entry of biosimilar biological products and interchangeable biological products.

S. 148

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. 148, a bill to enable to Federal Trade Commission to deter filing of sham citizen petitions to cover an attempt to interfere with approval of a competing generic drug or biosimilar, to foster competition, and facilitate the efficient review of petitions filed in good

faith to raise legitimate public health concerns, and for other purposes.

S. 163

At the request of Mr. MARSHALL, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) and the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) were added as cosponsors of S. 163, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to remove short-barreled rifles, short-barreled shotguns, and certain other weapons from the definition of firearms for purposes of the National Firearms Act, and for other purposes.

S. 173

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) were added as cosponsors of S. 173, a bill to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to require the safe storage of firearms, and for other purposes.

S. 184

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) were added as cosponsors of S. 184, a bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that major rules of the executive branch shall have no force or effect unless a joint resolution of approval is enacted into law.

S.J. RES. 5

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 5, a joint resolution disapproving the action of the District of Columbia Council in approving the Local Resident Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2022.

S. CON. RES. 2

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 2, a concurrent resolution commending the bravery, courage, and resolve of the women and men of Iran demonstrating in more than 133 cities and risking their safety to speak out against the Iranian regime's human rights abuses.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 203. A bill to amend section 923 of title 18, United States Code, to require an electronic, searchable database of the importation, production, shipment, receipt, sale, or other disposition of firearms; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, today I rise to introduce the Crime Gun Tracing Modernization Act.

This bill would bring ATF into the 21st century by allowing the Agency to electronically search for the records of

guns used in crimes across the country. It is hard to believe that ATF still must store paper records and search them by hand in order to identify the guns used for criminal activity. These archaic rules prevent the people responsible for enforcing our laws from doing their jobs effectively.

The National Tracing Center at ATF is responsible for quickly placing crime gun ownership information into the hands of law enforcement officials so they can solve crimes and save lives. In 2021, National Tracing Center receive over 540,000 trace requests.

Unfortunately, the timely completion of these trace requests has been made nearly impossible because ATF cannot search these records electronically.

To make matters worse, these millions of records are stored in thousands of boxes that are overflowing the hallways of the National Tracing Center in Martinsburg, WV. The records that agents must search through are so massive, ATF has been told that if it places more boxes inside the facility, the floor may collapse.

Every moment after a crime is committed matters dearly to our law enforcement agencies. Prohibiting the efficient search of these records puts our communities at risk.

I thank my former colleague Senator Leahy for championing this bill last Congress. I am committed to continuing the fight for this important fix.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. COTTON, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. RISCH, Mr. MARSHALL, and Mr. MORAN):

S. 204. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, later today, I will introduce the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, along with my colleague Senator LANKFORD. It is a simple bill. It simply states that a baby born alive after an attempted abortion is entitled to the same protection and medical care that any other newborn baby is entitled to. And you would think that it would be a simple "yes" vote from every Member of this body, but unfortunately, that is not where we are.

Four years ago and then three years ago, the U.S. Senate took up this bill, and almost every single Democrat in this body voted against it. Just 3 weeks ago, the House of Representatives took up this bill, and almost every single Democrat over there voted against it. Apparently banning infanticide is now controversial because—let's be clear—that is what we are talking about here.

Some Democrats have tried to cloak their opposition to this bill in meaningless phrases about a private decision

between a woman and her doctor, but what is the decision we are talking about? We are talking about whether or not a living baby, born after an attempted abortion, should be provided with medical care or be left to die or, I suppose, be killed outright by the abortionist. That is what we are talking about. That is the "decision" Democrats are referring to. And that is apparently the decision they think should be left up to patients and their doctors—whether or not to let a living, breathing baby die.

The Senate voted on a previous version of this bill introduced by my former colleague Senator Sasse 4 years ago when the Democratic Governor of Virginia came right out and said you could keep a newly born baby comfortable while you decided what to do with it—in other words, while you decided whether to let the child die or, I guess, kill it or whether to let it live. That chilling statement made it abundantly clear that we needed to state explicitly that any baby, wherever he or she is born, including in an abortion clinic, is entitled to medical care. It is staggering that we have gotten to the point where we need to debate this in Congress, staggering that this wouldn't be an automatic "yes" vote from every Member of this body, but that is where we are.

If anyone thinks that abortion isn't a slippery slope, that we can somehow devalue unborn babies' lives while maintaining respect for everyone else's, then I am here to tell them differently because the Democratic Party has gotten to the point where its members not only oppose legislation to protect unborn babies; they oppose legislation to protect born ones as well. In Democrats' world, there are now apparently two classes of born babies: the wanted ones born alive in delivery rooms and the unwanted ones born alive in abortion clinics. Apparently, only one of those classes of babies is entitled to the equal protection of the laws.

Democrats talk a lot about abortion when they are talking about this bill, but this bill, of course, would do absolutely nothing to restrict abortion. It is not a bill protecting unborn babies; it is a bill protecting born babies.

I do understand why Democrats are so worked up, though, because while this bill may not do anything to restrict abortion, there is always the chance that drawing attention to the humanity and dignity of the child who has just been born will draw attention to the humanity and dignity of the child who is about to be born—the child Democrats are determined our laws should not protect. And Democrats are apparently so determined to preserve the so-called right to kill unborn babies that they are fully comfortable opposing a law that would protect born—born—babies.

These are hard things to talk about, but they have to be said because that is the reality of where we are right now.

Roughly 50 percent of the U.S. Congress opposes giving the equal protection of the law to born human beings if they happen to be born alive following an attempted abortion.

Now, I think we are at a real inflection point as to where we want to be as a nation. Do we want to be a country where the circumstances of your birth determine whether or not your right to life is protected? Do we want to be a country that endorses leaving living, breathing babies to die, that discards born babies because they are, for a moment at their birth, unwanted? I don't know. I think we are better than that. We have to be better than that.

If we truly want to be a nation that protects human rights, that stands for justice, that defends the vulnerable, then we cannot be a nation that says it is acceptable to leave living, breathing, born human beings to die in abortion clinics, that says there are two classes of newborn babies and that only one of them deserves to be protected. Every human being deserves to be protected, no matter the circumstances of his or her birth.

I want to thank Senator LANKFORD for his leadership on this issue. We will be working together to advance this legislation, and I pray that sooner rather than later, we will get to the day when this bill will be an automatic "yes" vote from every Member of this body.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 204

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act".

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) If an abortion results in the live birth of an infant, the infant is a legal person for all purposes under the laws of the United States, and entitled to all the protections of such laws.

(2) Any infant born alive after an abortion or within a hospital, clinic, or other facility has the same claim to the protection of the law that would arise for any newborn, or for any person who comes to a hospital, clinic, or other facility for screening and treatment or otherwise becomes a patient within its care.

#### SEC. 3. BORN-ALIVE INFANTS PROTECTION.

(a) REQUIREMENTS PERTAINING TO BORN-ALIVE ABORTION SURVIVORS.—Chapter 74 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 1531 the following:

##### "§ 1532. Requirements pertaining to born-alive abortion survivors

"(a) REQUIREMENTS FOR HEALTH CARE PRACTITIONERS.—In the case of an abortion or attempted abortion that results in a child born alive:

"(1) DEGREE OF CARE REQUIRED; IMMEDIATE ADMISSION TO A HOSPITAL.—Any health care practitioner present at the time the child is born alive shall—

"(A) exercise the same degree of professional skill, care, and diligence to preserve

the life and health of the child as a reasonably diligent and conscientious health care practitioner would render to any other child born alive at the same gestational age; and

"(B) following the exercise of skill, care, and diligence required under subparagraph (A), ensure that the child born alive is immediately transported and admitted to a hospital.

"(2) MANDATORY REPORTING OF VIOLATIONS.—A health care practitioner or any employee of a hospital, a physician's office, or an abortion clinic who has knowledge of a failure to comply with the requirements of paragraph (1) shall immediately report the failure to an appropriate State or Federal law enforcement agency, or to both.

"(b) PENALTIES.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Whoever violates subsection (a) shall be fined under this title, imprisoned for not more than 5 years, or both.

"(2) INTENTIONAL KILLING OF CHILD BORN ALIVE.—Whoever intentionally performs or attempts to perform an overt act that kills a child born alive described under subsection (a), shall be punished as under section 1111 of this title for intentionally killing or attempting to kill a human being.

"(c) BAR TO PROSECUTION.—The mother of a child born alive described under subsection (a) may not be prosecuted for a violation of this section, an attempt to violate this section, a conspiracy to violate this section, or an offense under section 3 or 4 of this title based on such a violation.

"(d) CIVIL REMEDIES.—

"(1) CIVIL ACTION BY A WOMAN ON WHOM AN ABORTION IS PERFORMED.—If a child is born alive and there is a violation of subsection (a), the woman upon whom the abortion was performed or attempted may, in a civil action against any person who committed the violation, obtain appropriate relief.

"(2) APPROPRIATE RELIEF.—Appropriate relief in a civil action under this subsection includes—

"(A) objectively verifiable money damage for all injuries, psychological and physical, occasioned by the violation of subsection (a);

"(B) statutory damages equal to 3 times the cost of the abortion or attempted abortion; and

"(C) punitive damages.

"(3) ATTORNEY'S FEE FOR PLAINTIFF.—The court shall award a reasonable attorney's fee to a prevailing plaintiff in a civil action under this subsection.

"(4) ATTORNEY'S FEE FOR DEFENDANT.—If a defendant in a civil action under this subsection prevails and the court finds that the plaintiff's suit was frivolous, the court shall award a reasonable attorney's fee in favor of the defendant against the plaintiff.

"(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section the following definitions apply:

"(1) ABORTION.—The term 'abortion' means the use or prescription of any instrument, medicine, drug, or any other substance or device—

"(A) to intentionally kill the unborn child of a woman known to be pregnant; or

"(B) to intentionally terminate the pregnancy of a woman known to be pregnant, with an intention other than—

"(i) after viability, to produce a live birth and preserve the life and health of the child born alive; or

"(ii) to remove a dead unborn child.

"(2) ATTEMPT.—The term 'attempt', with respect to an abortion, means conduct that, under the circumstances as the actor believes them to be, constitutes a substantial step in a course of conduct planned to culminate in performing an abortion.

"(3) BORN ALIVE.—The term 'born alive' has the meaning given that term in section 8 of title 1, United States Code (commonly

known as the 'Born-Alive Infants Protection Act')."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) The table of sections for chapter 74 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"1532. Requirements pertaining to born-alive abortion survivors."

(2) The chapter heading for chapter 74 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking "PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTIONS" and inserting "ABORTIONS".

(3) The table of chapters for part I of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to chapter 74 and inserting the following:

"74. Abortion ..... 1531".

#### SEC. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect one day after the date of enactment.

By Mr. DURBIN:

S. 205. A bill to promote minimum State requirements for the prevention and treatment of concussions caused by participation in school sports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 205

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Protecting Student Athletes from Concussions Act of 2023".

#### SEC. 2. MINIMUM STATE REQUIREMENTS.

(a) MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS.—Each State that receives funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) and does not meet the requirements described in this section, as of the date of enactment of this Act, shall, not later than the last day of the fifth full fiscal year after the date of enactment of this Act (referred to in this Act as the "compliance deadline"), enact legislation or issue regulations establishing the following minimum requirements:

(1) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY CONCUSSION SAFETY AND MANAGEMENT PLAN.—Each local educational agency in the State, in consultation with members of the community in which such agency is located, shall develop and implement a standard plan for concussion safety and management that—

(A) educates students, parents, and school personnel about concussions, through activities such as—

(i) training school personnel, including coaches, teachers, athletic trainers, related services personnel, and school nurses, on concussion safety and management, including training on the prevention, recognition, and academic consequences of concussions and response to concussions; and

(ii) using, maintaining, and disseminating to students and parents—

(I) release forms and other appropriate forms for reporting and record keeping;

(II) treatment plans; and

(III) prevention and post-injury observation and monitoring fact sheets about concussion;

(B) encourages supports, where feasible, for a student recovering from a concussion (regardless of whether or not the concussion occurred during school-sponsored activities,



during school hours, on school property, or during an athletic activity), such as—

(i) guiding the student in resuming participation in athletic activity and academic activities with the help of a multi-disciplinary concussion management team, which may include—

(I) a health care professional, the parents of such student, a school nurse, relevant related services personnel, and other relevant school personnel; and

(II) an individual who is assigned by a public school to oversee and manage the recovery of such student; and

(ii) providing appropriate academic accommodations aimed at progressively reintroducing cognitive demands on the student; and

(C) encourages the use of best practices designed to ensure, with respect to concussions, the uniformity of safety standards, treatment, and management, such as—

(i) disseminating information on concussion safety and management to the public; and

(ii) applying uniform best practice standards for concussion safety and management to all students enrolled in public schools.

(2) **POSTING OF INFORMATION ON CONCUSSIONS.**—Each public elementary school and each public secondary school shall post on school grounds, in a manner that is visible to students and school personnel, and make publicly available on the school website, information on concussions that—

(A) is based on peer-reviewed scientific evidence (such as information made available by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention);

(B) shall include information on—

(i) the risks posed by sustaining a concussion;

(ii) the actions a student should take in response to sustaining a concussion, including the notification of school personnel; and

(iii) the signs and symptoms of a concussion; and

(C) may include information on—

(i) the definition of a concussion;

(ii) the means available to the student to reduce the incidence or recurrence of a concussion; and

(iii) the effects of a concussion on academic learning and performance.

(3) **RESPONSE TO CONCUSSION.**—If an individual designated from among school personnel for purposes of this Act, one of whom must be in attendance at every school-sponsored activity, suspects that a student has sustained a concussion (regardless of whether or not the concussion occurred during school-sponsored activities, during school hours, on school property, or during an athletic activity)—

(A) the student shall be—

(i) immediately removed from participation in a school-sponsored athletic activity; and

(ii) prohibited from returning to participate in a school-sponsored athletic activity on the day that student is removed from such participation; and

(B) the designated individual shall report to the parent or guardian of such student—

(i) any information that the designated school employee is aware of regarding the date, time, and type of the injury suffered by such student (regardless of where, when, or how a concussion may have occurred); and

(ii) any actions taken to treat such student.

(4) **RETURN TO ATHLETICS.**—If a student has sustained a concussion (regardless of whether or not the concussion occurred during school-sponsored activities, during school hours, on school property, or during an athletic activity), before such student resumes participation in school-sponsored athletic

activities, the school shall receive a written release from a health care professional, that—

(A) states that the student is capable of resuming participation in such activities; and

(B) may require the student to follow a plan designed to aid the student in recovering and resuming participation in such activities in a manner that—

(i) is coordinated, as appropriate, with periods of cognitive and physical rest while symptoms of a concussion persist; and

(ii) reintroduces cognitive and physical demands on such student on a progressive basis only as such increases in exertion do not cause the reemergence or worsening of symptoms of a concussion.

(b) **NONCOMPLIANCE.**—

(1) **FIRST YEAR.**—If a State described in subsection (a) fails to comply with subsection (a) by the compliance deadline, the Secretary of Education shall reduce by 5 percent the amount of funds the State receives under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) for the first fiscal year following the compliance deadline.

(2) **SUCCEEDING YEARS.**—If the State fails to so comply by the last day of any fiscal year following the compliance deadline, the Secretary of Education shall reduce by 10 percent the amount of funds the State receives under that Act for the following fiscal year.

(3) **NOTIFICATION OF NONCOMPLIANCE.**—Prior to reducing any funds that a State receives under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) in accordance with this subsection, the Secretary of Education shall provide a written notification of the intended reduction of funds to the State and to the appropriate committees of Congress.

### SEC. 3. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to affect civil or criminal liability under Federal or State law.

### SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **CONCUSSION.**—The term “concussion” means a type of mild traumatic brain injury that—

(A) is caused by a blow, jolt, or motion to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly in the skull;

(B) disrupts normal brain functioning and alters the mental state of the individual, causing the individual to experience—

(i) any period of observed or self-reported—

(I) transient confusion, disorientation, or impaired consciousness;

(II) dysfunction of memory around the time of injury; or

(III) loss of consciousness lasting less than 30 minutes; or

(ii) any 1 of 4 types of symptoms, including—

(I) physical symptoms, such as headache, fatigue, or dizziness;

(II) cognitive symptoms, such as memory disturbance or slowed thinking;

(III) emotional symptoms, such as irritability or sadness; or

(IV) difficulty sleeping; and

(C) can occur—

(i) with or without the loss of consciousness; and

(ii) during participation in any organized sport or recreational activity.

(2) **HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL.**—The term “health care professional”—

(A) means an individual who has been trained in diagnosis and management of concussion in a pediatric population; and

(B) is registered, licensed, certified, or otherwise statutorily recognized by the State to provide such diagnosis and management.

(3) **LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY; STATE.**—The terms “local educational agency” and

“State” have the meanings given such terms in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

(4) **RELATED SERVICES PERSONNEL.**—The term “related services personnel” means individuals who provide related services, as defined under section 602 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401).

(5) **SCHOOL-SPONSORED ATHLETIC ACTIVITY.**—The term “school-sponsored athletic activity” means—

(A) any physical education class or program of a school;

(B) any athletic activity authorized during the school day on school grounds that is not an instructional activity;

(C) any extra-curricular sports team, club, or league organized by a school on or off school grounds; and

(D) any recess activity.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. CRAMER):

S. 220. A bill to prohibit certain non-compete agreements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, if you were working for the sandwich shop Jimmy John's—I don't know if the Presiding Officer has ever had a Jimmy John's sandwich. It is a pretty good sandwich. If you were working for Jimmy John's sandwich shop in the middle of the last decade, around 2014, 2015, 2016, you might have been required to sign a contract with Jimmy John's to make sandwiches. Buried in that contract, as a fast food worker at Jimmy John's in 2014, 2015, 2016, was something called a noncompete clause.

A lot of Americans have heard of noncompete clauses. They think of them as applying to executives, individuals who make a lot of money, who possess really intricate, detailed information about a product. But Jimmy John's made everybody who came to work in many of their sandwich shops sign a noncompete agreement. The noncompete agreement for Jimmy John's sandwich makers said that if you ever left Jimmy John's, you would not be able to work at any business within 2 to 3 miles of any Jimmy John's for any company that made over 10 percent of its revenue from selling “submarine, hero-type, deli-style, pita, and/or wrapped or rolled sandwiches” for 2 years. Low-income, minimum-wage workers at Jimmy John's, if they tried to leave that job, were prohibited from going to work for Subway or going to work for D'Angelo's or maybe even, according to this definition, McDonald's or Burger King.

Of course, that sounds patently ridiculous. Why would you need to protect the intellectual secrets of sandwich making at Jimmy John's by applying noncompete agreements for these low-income workers? But this wasn't and isn't an anomaly. In fact, one out of six hospitality restaurant workers, by some studies, has a noncompete agreement. Today, noncompete agreements apply to one in five American workers. That is 30 million workers.



Amazon warehouse workers were required for a long time to sign noncompete agreements. I read a story the other day of a company called Camp Bow Wow that pays people to pet-sit. They required their pet sitters to sign noncompete agreements.

The reason that noncompete agreements are being used at industrial-level scale today is not to protect the trade secrets of sandwich making or pet sitting; it is to keep wages down. It is to prevent low-income workers from being able to go out and get a better job and thus pressure their existing employer to increase wages. This practice has become pervasive throughout our economy, and it is just a fundamental restraint on free trade.

Now, many of these noncompete agreements end up being nonenforceable. A lot of State laws don't allow you to have a noncompete agreement for a low-wage worker. But in practice, it doesn't really matter because when that individual tries to leave and they get told they can't because of a noncompete agreement, they don't know that it is nonenforceable in State law or if they do know, they don't have the resources to contest the cause in a court of law. So what do they do? They just end up staying.

The FTC filed a complaint in January of this year against two Michigan-based companies that required their security guards to sign noncompete agreements prohibiting them from working for a competing business within a 100-mile radius. Despite the fact that these security guards were making very low wages, the company's noncompete included a restriction that required the employee to pay a \$100,000 penalty for any alleged violation of the clause. The intention here is simply to bind the employee to the company, to give them no ability to bargain for a higher wage because they might be able to get a better wage somewhere else. There is no proprietary information that those security guards possess.

What is equally interesting is that there is increasingly great data to show that there is actually no reason to have noncompete agreements even for higher income workers. The imposition of noncompete agreements on low-wage workers is primarily about just trying to restrain wages, but the imposition of noncompete agreements on higher income workers is about impeding innovation. It is about a company that doesn't want competitors, so they bind their executives to noncompete agreements such that their executives can't go work for a competing company or can't go out and start a company that may compete.

What is so maddening is that there are plenty of protections in our existing law that protect companies from intellectual property theft or patent theft. If what you worry about is your trade secrets being appropriated by a competitor, well, the law already protects you from that. You don't have to deny your employees or your execu-

tives the ability to go work for another company.

California rightly has the reputation as probably the world's center of innovation, right? More startups, more world-changing companies have come out of California than any other State and probably than any other part of the world. California was the first or one of the first in this country to ban noncompete agreements. California decided it didn't need noncompete agreements to protect intellectual property in a State that probably has a greater interest in protecting intellectual property than any other State. In fact, California's economic engine is dependent on their prohibition of noncompete agreements because by prohibiting noncompete agreements, California has a culture in which startups are encouraged, in which executives can leave one company and start another.

Eric Yuan was an executive at Cisco Webex. If he wasn't working in California, he might have had a noncompete agreement applied to him, but he didn't, and so he could leave and start a company that was arguably competing with Cisco Webex—a company called Zoom.

To many economists on the right and the left, this is becoming a no-brainer. Noncompete agreements are bad for wage growth. Noncompete agreements are bad for innovation. Noncompete agreements are bad for low-income workers. Noncompete agreements are bad for high-income workers.

So today I am on the floor to talk about what the data tells us about noncompete agreements as a means to encourage my colleagues to take a look at a piece of legislation that we are introducing today, the Workforce Mobility Act, a pretty simple piece of legislation that would ban the use of noncompete agreements for both high-income and low-income workers.

It is a bipartisan piece of legislation. Senator TODD YOUNG, Senator KEVIN CRAMER, Senator TIM KAINE, and I are introducing this bill today. I don't know that there is another policy that the four of us can find common ground on, but we find common ground on this issue because maybe if you are a progressive, you come to this issue through the rights of workers and boosting their wages. If you are a conservative, you come to this issue through the restraint on free trade that exists through the perpetuation of noncompete agreements. But all across America, this is a pretty bipartisan issue, and here in the Senate, it is bipartisan as well.

I am glad that the FTC, just a week or so ago, announced that they were going to undertake a rule to ban noncompete agreements. I congratulate the Biden administration and the FTC for taking a leadership role. It may be that that rule, once it is adopted and in place, will do the work of this legislation, but we know that rules are only as good as the commitment of one particular administration.

So my hope and my recommendation is that no matter what the FTC does when it comes to restrictions on noncompete agreements, that we pass the Workforce Mobility Act so that we provide a guarantee in the law that noncompete agreements are not going to stand in the way of wages rising or small businesses starting.

There is a lot of public support out there as 92 percent of voters think that it is way too hard today to start or grow a new business and as 80 percent of voters—again, across party lines—support policies that allow people who want to start a new business more freedom by reducing the restrictions that come when you try to venture out on your own. Increasingly, one of the primary restrictions that exists for people who want to start a new business, who want to become entrepreneurs, are these noncompete agreements.

So I am coming to the floor today to recommend this bipartisan piece of legislation to my colleagues, to point to the States that have already adopted these restrictions, and to show how not only does the sky not fall when you get rid of noncompete agreements but that startups flourish and that wages increase.

Finally, I come to recommend to my colleagues that, in an environment where it is going to be a little harder to find agreement between Republicans and Democrats, this is a place where we can find that common ground. In one piece of policy, we can stick up for low-income workers and the free market. This is something that we can do together to help raise wages and to help power our economy.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 21—SUPPORTING THE OBSERVATION OF NATIONAL TRAFFICKING AND MODERN SLAVERY PREVENTION MONTH DURING THE PERIOD BEGINNING ON JANUARY 1, 2023, AND ENDING ON FEBRUARY 1, 2023, TO RAISE AWARENESS OF, AND OPPOSITION TO, HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MODERN SLAVERY

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BROWN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. PADILLA) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 21

Whereas the United States abolished the transatlantic slave trade in 1808 and abolished chattel slavery and prohibited involuntary servitude in 1865;

Whereas, because the people of the United States remain committed to protecting individual freedom, there is a national imperative to eliminate human trafficking and modern slavery, which is commonly considered to mean—

(1) the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of an individual through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjecting that individual to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery; or

(2) the inducement of a commercial sex act by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the individual induced to perform that act is younger than 18 years of age;

Whereas forced labor and human trafficking generates revenues of approximately \$150,000,000,000 annually worldwide, and there are an estimated 50,000,000 victims of human trafficking and modern slavery across the globe;

Whereas victims of human trafficking are difficult to identify and are subject to manipulation, force, fraud, coercion, and abuse;

Whereas children and youths experiencing homelessness are vulnerable and susceptible to manipulation, making them a prime target for the lucrative criminal industry of human trafficking;

Whereas the Department of Justice has reported that human trafficking and modern slavery has been reported and investigated in each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia;

Whereas the Department of State has reported that the top 3 countries of origin of federally identified human trafficking victims in the United States in fiscal year 2021 were the United States, Mexico, and Honduras;

Whereas, to help businesses in the United States combat child labor and forced labor in global supply chains, the Department of Labor has identified 158 goods from 77 countries that are made by child labor and forced labor;

Whereas, since 2007, the National Human Trafficking Hotline has identified 82,301 cases of human trafficking involving 164,839 victims;

Whereas there are known risk factors that contribute to youths running away, including domestic violence, child sexual abuse, and neglect, and runaway youths who experience homelessness are potential targets for human trafficking;

Whereas, of the more than 26,500 endangered runaways reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in 2020, 1 in 6 were likely child sex trafficking victims;

Whereas youth experiencing homelessness experience high rates of human trafficking and 1 in 5 homeless youths is a victim of sex trafficking, labor trafficking, or both;

Whereas 22 percent of youths who experience homelessness were approached for paid sex on their first night of homelessness;

Whereas LGBTQ youths are disproportionately affected, accounting for 33.8 percent of sex trafficking victims;

Whereas youths facing homelessness have a lower probability of being trafficked if they have a supportive adult in their life;

Whereas the Administration for Native Americans of the Department of Health and Human Services reports that American Indian, Alaska Native, and Pacific Islander women and girls have a heightened risk for sex trafficking;

Whereas the Department of Justice found that studies on the topic of human trafficking of American Indians and Alaska Natives suggest there are—

(1) high rates of sexual exploitation of Native women and girls;

(2) gaps in data and research on trafficking of American Indian and Alaska Native victims; and

(3) barriers that prevent law enforcement agencies and victim service providers from identifying and responding appropriately to Native victims;

Whereas, according to the Government Accountability Office, from fiscal year 2013 through fiscal year 2016, there were only 14 Federal investigations and 2 Federal prosecutions of human trafficking offenses in Indian country;

Whereas, to combat human trafficking and modern slavery in the United States and globally, the people of the United States, the Federal Government, and State, Tribal, and local governments must be—

(1) aware of the realities of human trafficking and modern slavery; and

(2) dedicated to stopping the horrific enterprise of human trafficking and modern slavery;

Whereas the United States should hold accountable all individuals, groups, organizations, governments, and countries that support, advance, or commit acts of human trafficking and modern slavery;

Whereas, through education, the United States must also work to end human trafficking and modern slavery in all forms in the United States and around the world;

Whereas victims of human trafficking deserve a trauma-informed approach that integrates the pursuit of justice and provision of social services designed to help them escape, and recover from, the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual trauma they endured;

Whereas combating human trafficking requires a whole-of-government effort that rests on a unified and coordinated response among Federal, State, Tribal, and local agencies and that places equal value on the prevention of trafficking, the identification and stabilization of victims, and the investigation and prosecution of traffickers;

Whereas laws to prosecute perpetrators of human trafficking and to assist and protect victims of human trafficking and modern slavery have been enacted in the United States, including—

(1) the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.);

(2) title XII of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (Public Law 113-4; 127 Stat. 136);

(3) the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-22; 129 Stat. 227);

(4) sections 910 and 914(e) of the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-125; 130 Stat. 239 and 274);

(5) section 1298 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (22 U.S.C. 7114);

(6) the Abolish Human Trafficking Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-392; 132 Stat. 5250);

(7) the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-393; 132 Stat. 5265);

(8) the Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-425; 132 Stat. 5472);

(9) the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-427; 132 Stat. 5503);

(10) the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022 (Public Law 117-103; 136 Stat. 840);

(11) the Abolish Trafficking Reauthorization Act of 2022 (Public Law 117-347; 136 Stat. 6199);

(12) the Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2022 (Public Law 117-348; 136 Stat. 6211); and

(13) the End Human Trafficking in Government Contracts Act of 2022 (Public Law 117-211; 136 Stat. 2248);

Whereas the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-22; 129 Stat. 227) established the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking to provide a formal platform for survivors of human trafficking to advise and make recommendations on Federal anti-trafficking policies to the Interagency Task Force to

Monitor and Combat Trafficking established by the President;

Whereas the Department of Defense, the General Services Administration, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration issued a final rule (80 Fed. Reg. 4967) to implement Executive Order 13627, entitled “Strengthening Protections Against Trafficking in Persons in Federal Contracts”, that clarifies the policy of the United States on combating trafficking in persons as outlined in the Federal Acquisition Regulation by strengthening the prohibition on contractors from charging employee recruitment fees;

Whereas, although such laws and regulations are currently in force, it is essential to increase public awareness, particularly among individuals who are most likely to come into contact with victims of human trafficking and modern slavery, regarding conditions and dynamics of human trafficking and modern slavery, precisely because traffickers use techniques that are designed to severely limit self-reporting and evade law enforcement;

Whereas January 1 is the anniversary of the effective date of the Emancipation Proclamation;

Whereas February 1 is—

(1) the anniversary of the date on which President Abraham Lincoln signed the joint resolution sending the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States to the States for ratification to forever declare, “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction”; and

(2) a date that has long been celebrated as National Freedom Day, as described in section 124 of title 36, United States Code; and

Whereas, under the authority of Congress to enforce the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States “by appropriate legislation”, Congress, through the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.), updated the post-Civil War involuntary servitude and slavery statutes and adopted an approach of victim protection, vigorous prosecution, and prevention of human trafficking, commonly known as the “3P” approach: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate supports—

(1) observing National Trafficking and Modern Slavery Prevention Month during the period beginning on January 1, 2023, and ending on February 1, 2023, to recognize the vital role that the people of the United States have in ending human trafficking and modern slavery;

(2) marking the observation of National Trafficking and Modern Slavery Prevention Month with appropriate programs and activities, culminating in the observance on February 1, 2023, of National Freedom Day, as described in section 124 of title 36, United States Code;

(3) urging continued partnerships with Federal, State, Tribal, and local agencies, as well as survivors of human trafficking, social service providers, and nonprofit organizations to address human trafficking with a collaborative, victim-centered approach; and

(4) all other efforts to prevent, eradicate, and raise awareness of, and opposition to, human trafficking and modern slavery.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 22—CONGRATULATING THE SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY JACKRABBITS ON WINNING THE 2023 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION I FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SUBDIVISION TITLE**

Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. ROUNDS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

**S. RES. 22**

Whereas, on January 8, 2023, the South Dakota State University (referred to in this preamble as “SDSU”) Jackrabbits defeated the North Dakota State University Bison by a score of 45 to 21 in the 2023 National Collegiate Athletic Association (referred to in this preamble as the “NCAA”) Division I Football Championship Subdivision (referred to in this preamble as the “FCS”) Championship game in Frisco, Texas;

Whereas this is the first national championship for the SDSU Jackrabbits football program and first team national championship in the NCAA Division I era for SDSU athletics;

Whereas the SDSU Jackrabbits finished the 2022-2023 season with an overall record of 14 wins and 1 loss, with 8 wins and 0 losses in the Missouri Valley Football Conference, including earning a number 1 seed in the FCS playoffs;

Whereas the SDSU Jackrabbits have qualified for the FCS playoffs the past 11 seasons;

Whereas the 2022-2023 SDSU Jackrabbits—

(1) averaged 34.2 points and 384.6 yards per game; and

(2) allowed only 15.8 points and 273.9 yards per game on average;

Whereas the SDSU head coach, John Stiegelmeier, was awarded the 2022 American Football Coaches Association National Coach of the Year Award for the FCS and the Stats Perform 2022 Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award;

Whereas Coach Stiegelmeier, a native of Selby, South Dakota, announced his retirement after 26 seasons as head coach of the SDSU Jackrabbits, finishing his head coaching career at SDSU, his alma mater, with a record of 199 wins and 112 losses; and

Whereas SDSU President Barry Dunn and Athletic Director Justin Sell have cultivated a standard of excellence within SDSU athletics and guided the athletic programs at SDSU to national prominence: Now, therefore, be it:

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates and honors the South Dakota State University football team on a successful season and for winning the 2023 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Football Championship Subdivision title;

(2) recognizes the hard work, dedication, determination, and commitment of the South Dakota State University football players, coaches, and staff;

(3) commends the Head Coach of the South Dakota State University Jackrabbits football team, John Stiegelmeier, for his dedication and service to the South Dakota State University football program; and

(4) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) the President of South Dakota State University, Barry Dunn;

(B) the Athletic Director of South Dakota State University, Justin Sell; and

(C) the Head Coach of the South Dakota State University Jackrabbits football team, John Stiegelmeier.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 23—DEMANDING THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA IMMEDIATELY RELEASE MARK SWIDAN**

Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. CORNYN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

**S. RES. 23**

Whereas Mark Swidan is being unjustly and arbitrarily detained by the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Communist Party of China (CPC), according to the United States Government and the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) Working Group on Arbitrary Detention;

Whereas Mark Swidan is a United States citizen from Luling, Texas, and is a resident of Houston, Texas;

Whereas, on November 13, 2012, Mark Swidan was abducted by officers of the Public Security Bureau while on a business trip to the People's Republic of China, and on December 21, 2012, Swidan was formally arrested following an indictment issued by the Public Prosecutions Office of the People's Procuratorate of Jiangmen City alleging that Swidan was part of a criminal conspiracy with 11 other individuals to manufacture and traffic drugs;

Whereas, on April 30, 2019, a Chinese court sentenced Swidan to death, which he has appealed;

Whereas security officials in the People's Republic of China repeatedly attempted to coerce Swidan into signing a confession, but Swidan refused to sign a confession and pleaded not guilty;

Whereas, according to evidence evaluated by the UNHRC Working Group on Arbitrary Detention—

(1) no drugs were found on Swidan or in his hotel room;

(2) the prosecution did not produce any forensic evidence of the alleged offenses;

(3) records in Swidan's passport indicate he was not in the People's Republic of China during the time of the offenses; and

(4) the 11 other individuals indicted in relation to the alleged conspiracy could not identify Swidan;

Whereas officials of the People's Republic of China and the CPC have maliciously and systematically denied Swidan's mother Katherine Swidan, a resident of Texas, and other members of his family the ability to contact him;

Whereas officials of the People's Republic of China and the CPC have denied and continue to deny United States diplomats full consular access to Swidan, in violation of international norms;

Whereas Swidan's detention has been and continues to be inhumane, and includes exposure to extreme weather conditions, sleep deprivation, and physical and psychological abuse;

Whereas Swidan's health has precipitously deteriorated and security officials in People's Republic of China continue to deny independent or competent medical care and evaluation to Swidan;

Whereas humanitarian organizations of the United States, including the Dui Hua Foundation, which helped put this case before the Working Group, and the Global Liberty Alliance, which has asked the Sister Cities programs to sever relationships with Jiangmen until Swidan is released, have sought to highlight the injustice and conditions of Swidan's detention;

Whereas the UNHRC Working Group on Arbitrary Detention—

(1) found that Swidan is being held in violation of customary international law;

(2) emphasized the nonconformity by the People's Republic of China with international norms, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and

(3) stressed that “the appropriate remedy would be to release Mr. Swidan immediately and accord him an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations, in accordance with international law”: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) demands that the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Communist Party of China immediately release Mark Swidan;

(2) condemns the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Communist Party of China for refusing to provide Swidan with—

(A) regular communication with his family;

(B) access to United States diplomats; and

(C) independent and competent medical care and evaluation; and

(3) calls on the United States Government to deepen and prioritize efforts to secure the release of Swidan, including by—

(A) urging Chinese counterparts at every level of engagement to release Swidan, and

(B) using the voice and vote of United States diplomats in international forums to highlight Swidan's case.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 24—SUPPORTING THE OBSERVATION OF “NATIONAL GIRLS & WOMEN IN SPORTS DAY” ON FEBRUARY 1, 2023, TO RAISE AWARENESS OF AND CELEBRATE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF GIRLS AND WOMEN IN SPORTS**

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. BALDWIN, and Ms. DUCKWORTH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

**S. RES. 24**

Whereas “National Girls & Women in Sports Day” began in 1987 as a day to recognize and acknowledge the success and progress of girls and women in sports;

Whereas athletic participation helps develop self-discipline, initiative, confidence, and leadership skills, and opportunities for athletic participation should be available to all individuals;

Whereas, because the people of the United States remain committed to protecting equality, it is imperative to eliminate the existing disparities between male and female youth athletic programs;

Whereas the share of athletic participation opportunities of high school girls has increased more than sixfold since the enactment of title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.) (referred to in this preamble as “title IX”), but high school girls still experience—

(1) a lower share of athletic participation opportunities than high school boys; and

(2) a lower level of athletic participation opportunities than high school boys enjoyed over 50 years ago;

Whereas 60 percent of high school girls participate in a sport;

Whereas female participation in college sports has nearly tripled since the enactment of title IX, but female college athletes

still comprise only 44 percent of the total collegiate athlete population, 30 percent of whom are white women and only 14 percent of whom are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (referred to in this preamble as “BIPOC”) women;

Whereas, in 1971, women coached 90 percent of collegiate women's teams, but as of 2023, women coach only 41 percent of all National Collegiate Athletic Association (referred to in this preamble as “NCAA”) women's teams and BIPOC women represent only 7 percent of head coaches;

Whereas there is a need to restore women to those positions to ensure fair representation and provide role models for young female athletes;

Whereas, for too long, the many achievements of women in sports have not received fair recognition;

Whereas the long history of women in sports in the United States—

(1) features many contributions made by female athletes that have enriched the national life of the United States; and

(2) includes inspiring figures, such as Gertrude Ederle, Wilma Rudolph, Althea Gibson, Mildred Ella “Babe” Didrikson Zaharias, Mary Lou Retton, and Patty Berg, who overcame difficult obstacles in their own lives—

(A) to advance participation by women in sports; and

(B) to set positive examples for the generations of female athletes who continue to inspire people in the United States today;

Whereas the United States must do all it can to break down the barriers of discrimination, inequality, and injustice in sports;

Whereas girls and young women in minority communities are doubly disadvantaged because—

(1) schools in minority communities have fewer athletic opportunities than schools in predominately White communities; and

(2) the limited resources for athletic opportunities in minority communities exacerbates the existing gender inequity between girls and boys;

Whereas the United States Women's National Soccer Team has led the fight domestically and internationally for equal treatment and compensation for female athletes;

Whereas the 4-time World Cup champion United States Women's National Soccer Team will compete to win a historic third World Cup title in a row at the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup;

Whereas, with the recent enactment of laws such as the Equal Pay for Team USA Act of 2022 (Public Law 117-340), Congress has taken steps—

(1) to ensure all athletes representing the United States in global competition receive equal pay and benefits regardless of gender; and

(2) to represent to the world, and especially young girls, that everyone deserves equal pay and benefits; and

Whereas, with increased participation by women and girls in sports, it is more important than ever to continue protecting title IX and uphold the mandate of the law of equitable and fair treatment and more general principles of gender equity throughout the sport system: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate supports—

(1) observing “National Girls & Women in Sports Day” on February 1, 2023, to recognize—

(A) all women athletes who represent schools, universities, and the United States in their athletic pursuits; and

(B) the vital role that the people of the United States have in empowering girls and women in sports;

(2) marking the observation of National Girls & Women in Sports Day with appro-

priate programs and activities, including legislative efforts—

(A) to build on the success of the Equal Pay for Team USA Act of 2022 (Public Law 117-340) and ensure equal pay for all female athletes; and

(B) to protect and uphold title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.) so that future generations of athletes will not have to experience the inequitable and unfair treatment that many athletes have had to endure, and continue to endure, today; and

(3) all ongoing efforts—

(A) to promote gender equity in sports, including equal pay and equal access to athletic opportunities for girls and women; and

(B) to support the commitment of the United States to expanding athletic participation for all girls and future generations of women athletes.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, today I rise to introduce a resolution recognizing February 1, 2023, as National Girls and Women in Sports Day.

Nearly 4 million girls and women across this country participate in high school and college athletics. Participation in sports has been shown to provide lifelong benefits to their physical and mental health. Athletic participation helps develop self-discipline, initiative, and confidence. When female athletes are supported on the field, they are empowered to become leaders off of it.

For far too long, the many achievements of women in sports have not received fair recognition. Female athletes, coaches, and trainers are consistently paid less than their male counterparts, subjected to subpar working conditions, and receive substantially less investment and promotional support for their athletic programs. This country must do all it can to break down the barriers of discrimination, inequality, and injustice in sports.

Today's resolution celebrates the tremendous accomplishments of female athletes across the United States, supports the growth of female sports, and encourages the next generation of athletes to follow their dreams.

I thank Senator CAPITO for leading this important bipartisan resolution with me, and for all of our supporters in the Senate.

#### SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 3—AFFIRMING THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT THAT IS ESSENTIAL TO A FREE SOCIETY AND PROTECTED FOR ALL PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES, AND RECOGNIZING THE 237TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENACTMENT OF THE VIRGINIA STATUTE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. COTTON, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. RISCH, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr.

CRUZ, and Mr. LEE) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. CON. RES. 3

Whereas the democracy of the United States is rooted in the fundamental truth that all people are created equal, endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;

Whereas the freedom of conscience was highly valued by—

(1) individuals seeking religious freedom who settled in the colonies in the United States;

(2) the founders of the United States; and

(3) Thomas Jefferson, who wrote in a letter to the Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church at New London, Connecticut, dated February 4, 1809, that “[n]o provision in our Constitution ought to be dearer to man than that which protects the rights of conscience against the enterprizes of the civil authority”;

Whereas the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom was—

(1) drafted by Thomas Jefferson, who considered the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom to be one of his greatest achievements;

(2) enacted on January 16, 1786; and

(3) the forerunner to the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

Whereas section 2(a) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401(a)) states that—

(1) “[t]he right to freedom of religion undergirds the very origin and existence of the United States”; and

(2) religious freedom was established by the founders of the United States “in law, as a fundamental right and as a pillar of our Nation”;

Whereas the role of religion in society and public life in the United States has a long and robust tradition;

Whereas individuals who have studied the democracy of the United States from an international perspective, such as Alexis de Tocqueville, have noted that religion plays a central role in preserving the Government of the United States because religion provides the moral base required for democracy to succeed;

Whereas, in *Town of Greece v. Galloway*, 572 U.S. 565 (2014), the Supreme Court of the United States affirmed that “people of many faiths may be united in a community of tolerance and devotion”;

Whereas the principle of religious freedom “has guided our Nation forward”, as expressed by the 44th President of the United States in a Presidential proclamation on Religious Freedom Day in 2011, and freedom of religion “is a universal human right to be protected here at home and across the globe”, as expressed by that President of the United States on Religious Freedom Day in 2013;

Whereas “[f]reedom of religion is a fundamental human right that must be upheld by every nation and guaranteed by every government”, as expressed by the 42nd President of the United States in a Presidential proclamation on Religious Freedom Day in 1999;

Whereas the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States protects—

(1) the right of individuals to freely express and act on the religious beliefs of those individuals; and

(2) individuals from coercion to profess or act on a religious belief to which those individuals do not adhere;

Whereas “our laws and institutions should not impede or hinder but rather should protect and preserve fundamental religious liberties”, as expressed by the 42nd President of the United States in remarks accompanying the signing of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. 2000bb et seq.);

Whereas, for countless people of the United States, faith is an integral part of every aspect of daily life and is not limited to the homes, houses of worship, or doctrinal creeds of those individuals;

Whereas “religious faith has inspired many of our fellow citizens to help build a better Nation” in which “people of faith continue to wage a determined campaign to meet needs and fight suffering”, as expressed by the 43rd President of the United States in a Presidential proclamation on Religious Freedom Day in 2003;

Whereas, “[f]rom its birth to this day, the United States has prized this legacy of religious freedom and honored this heritage by standing for religious freedom and offering refuge to those suffering religious persecution”, as noted in section 2(a) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401(a));

Whereas Thomas Jefferson wrote—

(1) in 1798 that each right encompassed in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States is dependent on “the other rights described in that Amendment, “thereby guarding in the same sentence, and under the same words, the freedom of religion, of speech, and of the press: insomuch, that whatever violated either, throws down the sanctuary which covers the others”; and

(2) in 1822 that the constitutional freedom of religion is “the most inalienable and sacred of all human rights”;

Whereas religious freedom “has been integral to the preservation and development of the United States”, and “the free exercise of religion goes hand in hand with the preservation of our other rights”, as expressed by the 41st President of the United States in a Presidential proclamation on Religious Freedom Day in 1993; and

Whereas we “continue to proclaim the fundamental right of all peoples to believe and worship according to their own conscience, to affirm their beliefs openly and freely, and to practice their faith without fear or intimidation”, as expressed by the 42nd Presi-

dent of the United States in a Presidential proclamation on Religious Freedom Day in 1998: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress—*

(1) on Religious Freedom Day on January 16, 2023, honors the 237th anniversary of the enactment of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom; and

(2) affirms that—

(A) for individuals of any faith and individuals of no faith, religious freedom includes the right of an individual to live, work, associate, and worship in accordance with the beliefs of the individual;

(B) all people of the United States can be unified in supporting religious freedom, regardless of differing individual beliefs, because religious freedom is a fundamental human right; and

(C) “the American people will remain forever unshackled in matters of faith”, as expressed by the 44th President of the United States in a Presidential proclamation on Religious Freedom Day in 2012.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I have three requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

#### COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 1, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on

Wednesday, February 1, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

#### SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 1, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed roundtable.

#### ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2023

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m., Thursday, February 2; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the Falk nomination and at 1:45 p.m., the Senate vote on confirmation of the Falk nomination; finally, that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider with respect to the Falk and Zakheim nominations be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:59 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, February 2, 2023, at 10 a.m.